

杠上恶质王爷：

宁儿



楚王妃



Chu Wang Fei - Chapter Prologue

Yun Fu's young mistress is weak and cowardly. After having her engagement broken off within the Jin Luan Dian, she kills herself by hitting her head upon a pillar.

When she wakes up, she is no longer feeble and is now cold and aloof making people terrified of her upon sight. She walks unhurriedly into the bloody hall and her chilly voice slowly resounds, "Then we can comply to Chen Wang's wishes."

Everybody knows that the young mistress's personality has taken a drastic turn after the events within the palace but none of them could ever guess that her spirit has been replaced.

A foreign environment where everybody has sinister and ulterior motives, where plots and schemes plague the families, where disputes permeate government affairs; she who has been raised in a boudoir seems harmless enough.

What happens if she is no longer soft and timid? What if, in between a single smile, she can raise forth wind and rain reeking of blood and terror?

Yun Fu – The official residence of the Yun family. Only government officials and wealthy families have a 'Fu' since they're massive and can usually house a few hundred people.

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 1

“Wang ye...wang ye...I beg you...please do not break of the engagement! Please...”

For a long time, the girl's bitter pleading echoed around the magnificent Jin Luan Dian. Her pitiful appearance, however, did not arouse any sympathy from the crowd; the palace maids continued to serve their respective masters whilst the masters simultaneously turned towards the man the girl was begging.

“Chen Wang...this...” the man sitting upon the throne, Yu Qian Di, glanced at the crowd below, feeling slightly awkward as Chen Wang stood silently in the middle of the grand chamber.

The girl's watery eyes instantly lit up and looked pleadingly at the man standing beside her, wishing over and over again he would change his mind. But all she received was his unwavering reply.

“I have already made up my mind, I beg the Emperor to fulfill my request!”

“No...no...” the young girl shook her head, unable to accept Chen Wang's continuous refusal of their engagement. Tears rolled down from the corners of her eyes and her agitation caused her tender lips to slightly tremble but Chen Wang's cold and resentful expression made her unable to express her heart's conflict out loud so she could only repeatedly murmur to herself.

As for the audience within the hall, well, they could only hold their breath.

The girl's face was now as pale as snow and her pleading eyes swept over the whole before she suddenly bit her lip and knelt down in front of him.

“Wang Ye...Meng'Er begs of you, please do not break off the engagement... please...” fragmented requests stumbled out of her mouth. Disregarding the crowd's cold stares, she began to repeatedly press her forehead against the floor.

The girl's sobs and the sound of her forehead meeting the ground resonated through the entire audience hall leaving all those inside to look at her with disdain.

The multiple looks upon him and the sounds coming from the girl next to him caused the originally calm Chen Wang to frown and stare at the girl with disgust. His face only darkened further when he saw how weak and cowardly she appeared at that moment.

"Ben Wang will never marry a weak woman like you, you will never become Wang Fei!"

And with that, he turned away.

When the girl heard the finality in his reply, her shoulders fell and her legs suddenly gave way beneath her, causing her to fall upon the ground. Hopelessness flashed across her eyes and she bit down hard on her lips until blood began to trickle.

Even though Yun Qian Meng was the precious mistress of the Yun family, it would be almost impossible for her to wed again after being rejected.

The audience's disdainful looks only agitated her further, causing her to suddenly burst out laughing as if she lost her mind.

"Hahahahahahaha!"

Tears trickled down her face as she continued laughing.

She slowly raised her delicately elegant face and looked at Chen Wang with infatuation, carefully tracing his stern and handsome profile...his straight stature...

"How could I continue living if Wang Ye does not want me anymore?" Yun Qian Meng murmured these few words and clumsily stood up, her eyes not leaving Chen Wang for a single moment.

Her pitiful appearance was enough to make anyone's heart break but not once did it arouse a single ounce of sympathy from Chen Wang.

Yun Qian Meng's eyes slowly rested upon the hall's red Long Pan column and a tiny bit of determination blazed forth from the depths of her eyes.

“Hurry! Stop her!”

Yu Qian Di saw through Yun Qian Meng and called out. The audience’s hearts leapt to their throats but none of them could react to the situation.

Bam!

The sound of the collision resonated like a clear bell through the solemn yet glorious Jin Luan Dian.

Wang Ye – A title given by the Emperor to those who he believes are worthy (i.e. gained a significant amount of land for the country, helped dethrone the previous Emperor etc) or a title which is passed down by the previous Wang to the inheritor (male) of the family. Chen Wang gets the ‘Wang’ title because he is the Emperor’s brother.

Jin Luan Dian – The Hall of Gold Chimes (the Emperor’s audience hall)

Yu Qian Di – The Emperor’s title, Chen Wang’s brother

Wang Fei – The Wang’s official wife

Long Pan – A coiling dragon

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 2

Jie jie – sister, can be used on any female who is slightly older than you

Nu bi – another way of saying ‘I’, used by female servants. It’s like saying ‘this servant...’

Ai jia – another way of saying ‘I’, used by a widowed empress

Zhang zui – slapping/boxing someone’s face

‘Er – used affectionately by adding it to the end of someone’s name

When Yun Meng managed to open her eyes, the first thing she saw was a sea of red. Not to mention the action made her head hurt even more than it already did. Through her hazy eyesight, she realized she was lying in an ancient looking room. A faint hint of blood mixed with incense floated around.

The last thing Yun Meng remembered before waking up was that she was completing a mission and was searching for a drug trafficker with her comrades from the police force...so why was she lying here?

Her injured head throbbed over and over again and suddenly, an endless stream of images began to rapidly flash through her mind.

The original owner of this body was called Yun Qian Meng and she was the Di Nv of Xi Chu Kingdom’s Right Prime Minister, Yun Xuan Zhi. Her birth mother had passed away from an illness when she only a month old and now one of her father’s concubines, Su Qin, looked after You Xiang Fu. After the death of her mother, Yun Qian Meng was constantly bullied by the concubines and her sisters because of her introverted and timid personality.

Fortunately enough, the Dowager Empress was her aunt and it was her who betrothed the infant Yun Qian Meng to Chen Wang. Unfortunately, she did not realize that Chen Wang was unsatisfied with the arrangement...thus leading to today’s events.

The clips in her mind stopped flashing right after Yun Qian Meng threw herself at the pillar. The memory of the pain increased her headache and she couldn't help but let out a tiny sigh.

“Ah!!!”

A frightened scream followed Yun Qian Meng's awakening followed by the sound of someone falling over.

“What is it? What happened?” Another voice asked angrily.

“Qiu Lian Jie Jie...young mistress isn't...she isn't...dead...” the frightened girl quickly bowed towards the maid who entered the room, softly speaking into her ear. When she reached the word 'dead', her voice became even softer.

Qiu Lian's eyes widened, “what?” she asked with disbelief, staring at the girl lying on the bed. Yun Qian Meng, however, didn't move a single inch, causing the suspicion in Qiu Lian's eyes to deepen.

“Jie Jie, I'm telling the truth! Nu bi would never tell a lie!” the small maidservant gathered the courage to walk towards the bed, pointing at the sleeping girl.

A complex expression flashed across Qiu Lian's eyes and she quickly hurried over to the bed. She looked sharply at the little maid beside her before directing her stare at Yun Qian Meng who had only closed her eyes to recuperate. Slowly and uncertainly, she raised a hand in front of the girl's nose.

Yun Qian Meng's steady breathing caused the Qiu Lian to feel nervous. She repeatedly asked herself the same question over and over again, how could a dead person be alive? Not to mention she had just reported the confirmed death of miss to the Dowager Empress, what was she going to do now that she was well and truly alive?

Qiu Lian's eyes rested on the sleeping Yun Qian Meng and she slowly reached forward to grab the quilt, gently and carefully bringing it over Yun Qian Meng's head.

Yun Qian Meng, who was only pretending to sleep, curled her hands into fists when she sensed the danger. Just as the quilt was about to cover her nose, she opened her eyes and used her hand to block Qiu Lian's motions.

“Young...young miss...” Qiu Lian called out guiltily, unable to recover from Yun Qian Meng’s sudden revival.

Yun Meng calmly took in Qiu Lian’s guilty expression and quickly searched her mind for any information of this girl.

Qiu Lian was given to her by Su Qing. After she came to serve her though, three of the four maidservants her mother left her had incidents. Some passed away and some left. Even though Qiu Lian treated her with disrespect and took control of her monthly allowance Yun Qian Meng didn’t say anything because she was afraid of Su Qin.

But from Qiu Lian’s threatening aura, Yun Meng could deduce that this girl had just tried to kill her, otherwise she wouldn’t cover a breathing person’s head with the quilt, nor would she show such an expression when Yun Meng woke up.

Yun Meng withdrew her sharp aura and sat up with the help from the little maidservant, “how long have I been unconscious for?”

The Qiu Lian right now had already covered up her guilty expression but she couldn’t help but think back to the cold look Yun Qian Meng gave her when she just woke up causing her to wonder if she had discovered her intentions.

“Young miss lost a lot of blood; you have been unconscious for an hour! We can only be thankful that Madam has been protecting miss from the heavens,” at that moment, some of the Dowager Empress’ maids walked in. Qiu Lian quickly covered Yun Qian Meng with the quilt before replying with choked sobs.

Yun Meng couldn’t help but laugh coldly when she saw Qiu Lian’s expression change within such a short amount of time. Nonetheless, she maintained her weak appearance and lifted a single hand up to point at the round table in the front room, “Qiu Lian, go pour me a cup of water. I am thirsty.”

Then exhausted, she closed her eyes and began to recuperate from her injury again.

Seeing the palace maids run out of the room to report the current situation to the Dowager Empress, Qiu Lian could no longer continue her attempts to kill Yun Qian Meng and could only listen to her orders and pour her a cup of water. When she returned to the bed, she discovered the miss had fallen back to sleep

again. Since a lot of the palace maids had begun to look their way, Qiu Lian could only stand next to the bed and wait for Yun Qian Meng to wake up.

After half an hour, Qiu Lian felt her hands go numb and her feet throb with pain. Her originally calm eyes were now clouded with anger.

Yun Meng waited for the dizziness to subside before opening her eyes, only to get a good look at Qiu Lian's impatient expression. The corner of her lips couldn't help but lift to form an incredibly faint smile.

Raising her jade-like hand, she said, "you must be tired, you can give it to me now."

Qiu Lian was incredibly desperate to pass the cup since it felt as if it weighed a ton. So with a face full of fury, she handed over the cup and stuffed it into Yun Qian Meng's hands without looking.

"Pa!"

Yun Qian Meng's hands didn't have any strength left and Qiu Lian let go of the cup early leaving the lukewarm water to splash all over Yun Qian Meng's hands and the exquisite tea set to shatter into pieces on the ground.

"How dare you!"

A threatening voice came in through the door. The servants, recognizing the voice, all knelt respectfully except for Qiu Lian who still hadn't come back to her senses and remained immobile.

"Dowager Empress..."

Yun Qian Meng made a move to get onto the ground and greet the Dowager Empress like everyone else but was stopped by her weak body. It didn't take long for her to give up and lean against the pillar of the bed, looking apologetically at the Dowager Empress.

"This child, how could you be so narrow-minded? Shui'Er, Bing'Er, hurry and help your mistress lie down!" The Dowager Empress personally helped Yun Qian Meng up before turning her attention to the kneeling Qiu Lian in the corner.

"You are Qiu Lan?" even though it was a question, the Dowager Empress's tone was definite.

“Yes,” from the corner of her eye, Qiu Lian recognized the edge of the robe belonging to the person standing behind the Dowager Empress. Her reply instantly became more confident and she even raised her head without the Dowager Empress’ permission.

The Dowager Empress seemed resolved to teach Qiu Lian a lesson and called out, “Somebody, zhang zui! She dares to not refer to herself as nu bi when ai jia questions her!”

Before Qiu Lian could react, the Dowager Empress’ elder maids had walked forth and began to carry out the Empress’ orders.

“Please do not be angry Dowager Empress, nu bi was wrong! Please save me!”

After being slapped, Qiu Lian suddenly felt afraid. She realized the man wasn’t going to say anything to help her so she could only lower her pride and bow her head towards the Dowager Empress over and over again.

But Qiu Lian’s cries for forgiveness only lit up the Dowager Empress’ suppressed anger and she called forth the imperial bodyguards with a wave of her hand.

“Hmph, you dare beg for forgiveness? You even act so boldly in front of ai jia, who knows how you treat Meng’Er! If ai jia did not hurry, the tea set would have fallen on Meng’Er no? You must have eaten a bear’s heart and a leopard’s gall to be so fearless. Somebody, come drag this woman out and lock her up. Ai jia will settle the debts afterwards!”

When the room had finally quieted down, the Dowager Empress turned to look at the middle aged man standing behind her.

Her tone was threatening, “Prime Minister Yun will not resent ai jia for giving your maidservant a lesson?”

Yun Xuan Zhi bowed before the Dowager Empress, “the Dowager Empress may dispose of her however she wishes to!” he dare not offend the Dowager Empress for a simple maid.

“Dowager Empress!” a weak call suddenly diverted the Dowager Empress’ attention. Yun Qian Meng had allowed Shui’Er and Bing’Er to help her up so she could bow down deeply before the Dowager Empress.

The coldness in the Dowager Empress' eyes vanished in an instant and was replaced with heartache for Yun Qian Meng.

“What are you doing? Hurry and lie down! If you have anything to say you must wait until your injuries have healed!” The Dowager Empress personally raised her handkerchief and gently wiped off the blood from Yun Qian Meng's right eye.

“The Dowager Empress cares for Meng'Er and this is Meng'Er's fortune! However, Meng'Er has something she would like to ask of the Dowager Empress and wishes for the Dowager Empress to agree.”

Yun Qian Meng knelt down and refused to move no matter how hard Shui'Er and Bing'E tried to help her back up.

Seeing how stubborn Yun Qian Meng was, Yun Xuan Zhi couldn't help but frown.

“Whatever next? What you did before already lost face for the Yun family and now you dare threaten the Dowager Empress? You...”

However, Yun Qian Meng did not wait for Yun Xuan Zhi to finish and opened her mouth first.

“Meng'Er would like to go to the grand hall.”

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 3

Chen – another way to say ‘I’, used by government officials

Wei chen – another way to say ‘I’, used by government officials

Ya tou – another way to say ‘girl’, it’s used affectionately in this case

Di Nv – the daughter of the official wife, the ‘legitimate child’. The daughter of a concubine will be termed ‘Shu Nv’

Ben Wang – another way to say ‘I’, used by a ‘Wang’

“Okay,” unexpectedly, the Dowager Empress immediately agreed to Yun Qian Meng’s request, however when her eyes swept over Yun Qian Meng’s injuries she added, “But you must remember, you must not rashly seek your own death!”

Hearing the warning buried within the Dowager Empress’ caring words, Yun Qian Meng slightly bowed her head and steadily replied, “Yes.”

“Prime Minister Yun shall also come with ai jia, you are Meng’Er’s father!” The Dowager Empress then turned to Yun Xuan Zhi, her bright eyes blaming him for not caring for his own daughter.

Detecting the Dowager Empress’ dissatisfaction with him, Yun Xuan Zhi lifted his eyes and glanced over at Yun Qian Meng before saying respectfully, “Chen will listen to the Dowager Empress’ orders.”

The group of people led by the Dowager Empress slowly headed towards Jin Luan Dian.

The Dowager Empress took in consideration of Yun Qian Meng’s injuries and purposefully slowed down the pace thus giving Yun Qian Meng some extra time to clear her head and familiarize herself with the environment.

“Wei chen pays respect to the Dowager Empress! Oh...what exactly happened to Miss Yun? Why is she covered in blood?”

Just as Yun Qian Meng was sorting the information in her mind, a voice travelled to them from the front.

The joking tone made everybody stop in their steps.

“What is Prime Minister Chu doing here?” hearing someone make fun of Yun Qian Meng’s appearance, the Dowager Empress’ face instantly darkened, her voice containing a trace of annoyance.

Yun Xuan Zhi’s face was ashen and his firmly pressed lips revealed his anger.

Yun Qian Meng slowly raised her head, looking past the Dowager Empress and at the man standing at the entrance of the Jin Luan Dian. He had a slight smile playing on his lips and the dark purple robe revealed his status as the highest ranking official of the Imperial Court. His tall figure and orderly appearance accentuated his noble exterior. His eyebrows looked as if they were painted on by black ink, his face was like the petal of a blossom and his eyes looked like autumn ripples. The smile he used when looking at the crowd brought out his handsomeness and made him stand out even more as compared to the cold and aloof Chen Wang.

The Dowager Empress also addressed him as Prime Minister Chu so it appeared that this man was Xi Chu Kingdom’s famous Left Prime Minister, Chu Fei Yang.

“Dowager Empress, chen has affairs to consult the Emperor and coincidentally met with the Dowager Empress,” even though he replied to the Dowager Empress’ question, Chu Fei Yang’s eyes pierced through the crowd and looked straight at Yun Qian Meng.

Except when those smiling eyes scanned over Yun Qian Meng’s calm and confident demeanor Chu Fei Yang couldn’t help but be surprised. Yun Qian Meng was staring straight back at him, measuring him from head to toe...

He quickly replaced his surprise with a smile before personally opening the portiere to allow the Dowager Empress into the hall.

Although Chu Fei Yang’s actions irritated the Dowager Empress, she could do

nothing but follow him as the eunuch had already reported their arrival.

“Empress Mother, why did you personally come?” Yu Gan Di was incredibly respectful towards the Dowager Empress and stood up to greet her.

When Chen Wang, who was standing on the side saw Yun Qian Meng, the disgust in his eyes suddenly flared up.

This time, Yun Qian Meng’s eyes did not redden from his hostility and she simply followed the Dowager Empress into the hall.

As they walked in, the thick smell of blood washed over them and their sights naturally rested on the red long pan column. Even though somebody had cleaned it up, there was still blood splattered on the floor around it. Even the incense couldn’t completely cover the smell.

And that Chen Wang with his cold face...when Yun Qian Meng saw how much he detested her, she too began to feel angry.

To Chen Wang, the human life must seem like nothing. Although she didn’t agree with the previous Yun Qian Meng’s actions and found her cowardly nature disdainful she accepted that she was only a pitiful young girl who had grown up without a mother in a hostile environment.

Yun Qian Meng greeted the Emperor along with everyone else and simply stood to one side, completely ignoring Chen Wang.

“I am here for Meng ya tou’s situation of course! Chen Wang, Meng ya tou is Xiang Fu’s di nv and she is ai jia’s niece. What are you not satisfied with?” (basically, Yun Qian Meng is the legitimate daughter of the Yun family and also my niece, how could you not be satisfied) After seeing Chen Wang’s icy face, the Dowager Empress began to angrily interrogate Chen Wang.

The Dowager Empress’ words caused Yun Qian Meng to frown but she pretended to be infatuated with Chen Wang and began to murmur, “Wang Ye...”

Her behavior made the frost in Chen Wang’s eyes to completely creep up and he said without any mercy, “Ben wang has already said, I will never wed you in this life, pack up your wild wishes!”

“Is Wang Ye serious?” Yun Qian Meng asked calmly.

“Most definitely!” although he didn’t understand why Yun Qian Meng was changing faces so quickly, he replied without any hesitation as soon as he thought of her weak appearance.

“Then we can do whatever Chen Wang wishes to!”

Right after Chen Wang’s words hit the floor; Yun Qian Meng opened her mouth and said those few words. Her cold voice stunned everyone in the hall.

Even though the injuries on Yun Qian Meng’s head robbed away some of her beauty, her confidence and her neither haughty nor humble expression was something no one had ever seen before. What made them even more stupefied was that the current Yun Qian Meng looked as if she had been completely reborn and she now let off a stunning aura.

“What makes you think that Chen Wang would fall for your act?” The sound of Chen Wang’s mocking laughter and insult broke the peace. (He’s assuming that she’s pretending she’s doesn’t like him anymore so he’ll be interested in her) Yun Qian Meng simply laughed in reply before bowing down in front of the Emperor, “will the Emperor please give an edict and break off the engagement between Chen Wang and I.”

Not a single person thought that Yun Qian Meng was being serious about breaking off the engagement; all of them had thought that she was only saying what she had said because she was angry but now that she was personally asking for an edict...

“Meng’Er, do not speak nonsense! Ai jia will take responsibility for you, how could you decide on something as important as this on your own?”

The Dowager Empress was the first to speak. She looked at Yun Qian Meng as if warning her and pressed down on her shoulder with a hand, indirectly telling her to shut her mouth.

“Meng’Er thanks the Dowager Empress for her consideration. However, Chen Wang does not care for me so why must I force him to do something he is unwilling to do? Even if Meng’Er marries Chen Wang we will never achieve true happiness. Since the Dowager Empress cares for Meng’Er I believe that the Dowager Empress is also unwilling to see Meng’Er unhappy.”

Yun Qian Meng pretended she did not feel the messages the Dowager Empress was trying to send to her and instead made it impossible for the Dowager Empress to immediately retaliate.

Only then did Chen Wang realize that he had been calculated by the girl. Right now, he clearly saw the calm in her eyes. There was no more infatuation and love for him in there and this made him feel displeased with the current situation. Only a few moments ago she was willing to kill herself for him but why does she not care at all now?

“Yun Qian Meng, you...” Chen Wang had just started speaking but was immediately cut off by the man beside him.

“Emperor, since both Chen Wang and Miss Yun are willing to break off the engagement then the Emperor should accept and save the world from another unhappy couple,” the silent Chu Fei Yang opened his mouth unexpectedly, instantly drawing a hateful look from Chen Wang.

How could a simple Prime Minister trifle in a Wang’s marriage? However, this engagement was something he originally did not want; if he wanted to keep Yun Qian Meng now then he may as well be slapping himself in the face.

Just as Chen Wang had his brows furrowed, Yun Qian Meng opened her mouth once again, “Will the Emperor and Dowager Empress please look upon Meng’Er’s mother’s early death and allow for Meng’Er to make this decision for herself.”

Seeing Yun Qian Meng’s determination, the Emperor exchanged a look with the Dowager Empress pondered for a moment before regretfully saying, “If it is like this then let it so be it.”

Basically, Chu Fei Yang was making fun of Yun Qian Meng in the beginning. He clearly knows of what happened in the Jin Luan Dian but thought of the events as amusing.

Yun Qian Meng makes Chen Wang reiterate his dislike for her and his intention to break off the engagement so she could personally ask the Emperor for an edict in case Chen Wang changes her mind.

The Dowager Empress doesn’t want Yun Qian Meng to break off the engagement as she wants Yun Qian Meng to marry Chen Wang is because it

would increase her own standing and power within the Imperial Palace.

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 4

Pai – sort of like a medallion showing that you are part of a particular family. The 'jin pai' (i.e. gold pai) is something possessed by all important members of the Imperial Family and represents the imperial power itself. So for example, if Yun Qian Meng present the 'jin pai', it's like the Dowager Empress is present at the scene herself.

Shu Nv – the 'illegitimate daughter'; her mother isn't the legal wife of the husband

Shu born – born 'illegitimately'

The Emperor sighs as he looks at Chen Wang and the nonchalant Yun Qian Meng who stands beside him before agreeing to their request.

He then dismisses the Dowager Empress and Yun Qian Meng from the hall in order to continue with official business. Whilst the Dowager Empress is dissatisfied with her niece breaking off the engagement without consulting her first, she is unable to protest or say anything else since the Emperor had already given out his edict and leaves as he has asked.

However, right before they exist the Jin Luan Dian, the Dowager Empress pauses in front of Chu Fei Yang where she glares at him for a few moments. Chu Fei Yang simply smiles at her, disregarding her threatening aura and instead turns his attention towards Yun Qian Meng who blatantly ignores him.

"Dowager Empress, chen still has some business and must leave first," right after leaving the hall, Chen Wang excuses himself, but not before staring at Yun Qian Meng and trying to see through her façade.

Just as the Dowager Empress is about to lecture Yun Qian Meng about the

events which had occurred within the hall, Yun Qian Meng speaks out and asks, “Dowager Empress, could you please give me face and let Qiu Lian go?”

With that simple request, the Dowager Empress has no choice but to redirect her anger at Yun Xuan Zhi as she believes that Yun Qian Meng is asking for the maidservant’s forgiveness because she’s afraid of her father. Worried about her niece’s welfare, she hands her gold pai to Bing’Er, telling her to use it in case Yun Qian Meng ever finds herself in a tight situation.

At this point, Su Qin and her daughter, Yun Ruo Xue, are waiting gleefully at home. Both of them believe that after being rejected within the Imperial Palace, Yun Qian Meng will become the butt of everybody’s jokes. Although they aren’t quite sure whether or not Yun Qian Meng is still alive, they know that it won’t matter since there’s no way Yun Qian Meng will ever be able to marry a decent man again.

Instead of seeing their home sedan, they see the Dowager Empress’ sedan pull up outside of the front door instead. Yun Ruo Xue rushes towards the door as she sees her elder sister being helped out.

“Jie Jie,” she calls out loudly, “what happened to you? Perhaps you did not go to the palace to eat and drink and have fun? After all, how could you end up like this if you did go for those purposes?”

A crowd forms outside of the estate and Yun Qian Meng slowly turns around to face Yun Ruo Xue with a smile, “and since when did Xiang Fu’s Shu Nv have the right to directly talk to me without greeting me first? Perhaps this is what concubine Su has been teaching her daughter all this time? My sister dares make a scene right outside our front door, does she not care for Father’s political appearance?”

Su Qin is stunned for a moment by Yun Qian Meng’s comeback and listens as the crowd points at both her and her daughter.

Yun Ruo Xue wants to retaliate but gets scared when she sees the dark look Yun Qian Meng has in her eyes; but when her eyes fall on the Dowager Empress’ sedan she can’t help but rebut, “did Jie Jie damage her head when she hit the pillar? Or maybe it is because Jie Jie suddenly has the Dowager Empress’ support

that you believe you can treat all those who are shu born like this? Ruo Xue completely understands, Jie Jie looks down upon us but Jie Jie, everybody has already heard of today's events. How can Jie Jie still have the face to return home? Are you not afraid of ruining Xiang Fu's appearance?"

Su Qin also walks forward to help her daughter, "yes, why is the eldest Miss angry? It was Chen Wang who broke off the engagement; it has nothing to do with us so there's no need for you to get angry at those who have done nothing wrong. Perhaps you see us as weak? People who are easy to bully?"

"Shut your mouth!" Yun Xuan Zhi, who had just arrived outside the door, gets angry at the mother and daughter when he hears the things they are calling out in broad daylight in front of the common people who had all gathered to watch the show.

Seeing Yun Xuan Zhi approach, Yun Qian Meng starts tearing up and begins to cry.

"Father, Meng'Er understands, Meng'Er does not have a mother to protect her and within the vast Xiang Fu, the concubine does not take Meng'Er seriously and looks down upon me. They all want to kick me out of Xiang Fu! Father, if this mansion has no place for Meng'Er then Meng'Er will go to the Dowager Empress' palace, at least the Dowager Empress still has room for Meng'Er."

Su Qin and Yun Ruo Xue are startled by the things that come out of Yun Qian Meng's mouth and upon hearing Yun Qian Meng bring out the Dowager Empress name, Yun Xuan Zhi gets angry at Su Qin and says before his concubine can defend himself, "Concubine Su, you, as a woman of the family, have exited the house without my permission. Thus, you are to be confined for ten days. As for Yun Ruo Xue who has disrespected her elder sister, you are to be confined for half a month!"

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 5

“Daddy! Y-you, you are actually helping her!” Yun Ruo Xue’s eyes reddened the moment she heard she was under house arrest and pointed a finger at her sister’s face.

Yun Qian Meng only looked at the finger and called, “Eunuch Qu!”

“Yes!”

“Did you take a good look at today’s events?” she asked before her father could say a word.

“Yes young mistress, I will report everything back to the Dowager Empress,” Eunuch Qu served the Dowager Empress, it was no surprise he knew what Yun Qian Meng was planning. Besides, even if Yun Qian Meng didn’t have the Dowager Empress supporting her in the shadows he still would have reported everything regardless – under what circumstances did a child of a concubine possess the right to insult and point her finger at the legitimate daughter of the Estate? Such behaviour was disgraceful and made him look at Yun Xuan Zhi with disapproval.

“Then I will thank Eunuch Qu,” Yun Qian Meng moved to the side and bowed slightly, showing him respect, “It is getting late and the Dowager Empress will require her people. I will not keep you any longer.”

“Yes, I understand,” and with that, the eunuch and his entourage made their way back to the palace.

Once the crowd had thinned out Yun Qian Meng turned to her father, “I’m feeling tired,” she said politely, “and I will go back to my quarters first.”

“Daddy...” Yun Ruo Xue sidled up to Yun Xuan Zhi the second Yun Qian Meng left with her maidservants, already beginning to slander Yun Qian Meng’s name.

“Xue’Er,” but before she could begin, she was immediately pulled back by her

mother, “don’t be rude. Your father made the right decision.”

Yun Qian Meng had won today’s battle and there was no doubt that Su Qing was even further away from her goal of becoming the official wife now that the eunuch was going to inform the Dowager Empress about today’s events not to mention the crowd of commoners who were still pointing and whispering about her and her daughter. It was clear that Yun Xuan Zhi did what he did to help them both get out of this situation.

But there was one thing she still didn’t understand, how come Yun Qian Meng came back from the palace an entirely different person? She didn’t even leave for that long...

“Young miss, I’m afraid that the Master’s decision to place Concubine Su and her daughter under house arrest was for their benefit,” Shui’Er piped up as the three of them made their way through the gardens towards Yun Qian Meng’s quarters.

Yun Qian Meng only laughed. If Shui’Er could figure out what her father was doing then how could she not? It was evident that Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue had heard what had happened in the palace and had come out of the estate which the sole purpose to humiliate her. Nonetheless, they could plan and try to calculate her all they want, there was still no way they would guess that the Yun Qian Meng they once knew of had already disappeared.

“Dong!” The sound of a wooden bucket hitting the ground stopped them in their steps and before any of them could react, a figure a thrown itself in front of Yun Qian Meng, “Oh! Miss! Young Mistress! What happened? Why are you all bloody?”

Yun Qian Meng looked down to see a girl around fourteen or fifteen clutching her arm. It was Mu Chun, a maidservant her mother had given her when she was still alive but taken away by Su Qing so she could replace Yun Qian Meng’s maidservants with her own people. Instead, Mu Chun was transferred so she could slave away and cut wood all day, a job even the men had trouble with. The job hadn’t treated her way, the girl’s face was waxen, her hair withered and yellowing and her clothes full of patches.

Yun Qian Meng smiled faintly, “I’m okay,” she reassured the girl, “but you,

you've thinned out again."

Yun Qian Meng's smile completely stopped Mu Chun's tears, since when was the young miss so optimistic?

"I'm fine," she said before realising she might get in trouble for loitering and quickly headed back to pick up the wooden bucket.

"Hold it," Yun Qian Meng ordered, "Shui'Er, go and tell the housekeeper that from now on, Mu Chun will be serving me. There will be no need for her to return to the woodcutter's quarters," and with that, she turned and continued on walking to her own quarters.

Qi Luo Yuan...

This was a yuan zi located in the north-western corner of the Estate, it had fallen into disrepair with weeds creeping up all over the place and old rooms which were falling apart. The path from the entrance to the main rooms were muddy and grass had covered up the majority of the footpaths. If it wasn't for Mu Chun who routinely did her best to maintain the place then she wouldn't even be able to make it to her room.

"Miss, I'm so sorry-" Mu Chun was about to explain the state of the courtyard before being cut off by Yun Qian Meng.

"There's no need to be sorry. We will wait for the housekeeper to come and sort this out for us, all of you can help me get changed first," then she turned to Shui'Er, "go to my father's study and ask him to come here once the housekeeper has arrived."

"Yes!"

But one seriously had to compliment the housekeeper. Yun Qian Meng had waited over half an hour before she heard the footsteps of the retainers approaching her quarters...

"This servant greets the young mistress!" The housekeeper was careful to treat Yun Qian Meng carefully after witnessing today's events but he still raised his head a little bit to shoot a glare at Mu Chun.

"Why is the housekeeper visiting my Qi Luo Yuan?" Yun Qian Meng asked,

slowly lifting the tea set in front of her and taking a sip of water.

“This servant heard that the young miss wanted Mu Chun to serve her, however this maidservant was moved by the Mistress so I think it may not be a good idea...”

Yun Qian Meng simply lowered the cup and smiled at the housekeeper, “Mistress? Hmm, perhaps the housekeeper is talking about Concubine Su? See, this is something I simply don’t understand, why are all the servants in the Estate calling a mere concubine the mistress of the Estate? The legitimate wife of the Prime Minister?”

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 6

Chu Wang Fei – Chapter 6

Even in his wildest dreams, butler Zhao never expected Yun Qian Meng would go so far as to catch even a slight slip of the tongue. He couldn't help but feel inwardly vexed at his own carelessness.

But seeing her gentle, smiling expression, he thought in his heart that if not for the Empress Dowager's backing, this young lady would not have spoken in such a way!

He reckoned that she was only putting up a brave front at the moment, thinking that she didn't dare to really offend himself as the butler!

Therefore, butler Zhao, while drawing back the corners of his mouth, looked disdainfully at her as he explained, "Young miss should not get angry! This Suconcubine's position might not be official, but everyone has addressed her as such for many years, even master allows it! Young miss should not damage the relationship between father and daughter over such small matters."

Yun Qian Meng had anticipated long ago that he would use this excuse. She didn't show any anger. Instead, the smile on her face widened.....

"Butler, I really dislike what you're saying! My relationship with father, how can other matters generate animosity between us?!" Even though her voice was soft, Yun Qian Meng's gaze carried fierceness that caused others' hearts to tremble!

Butler Zhao was momentarily scared, but he still could not grasp if she was really angry or only putting on airs. He could only hurriedly smile while apologizing, "Yes, of course, young miss is correct! Only, after so many years it has become a habit. Even more so, the estate is currently governed by Su

concubine. If she wasn't given any status, I'm afraid that the more talkative servants won't accept her authority!"

He observed Yun Qian Meng's expression as he spoke, properly reminding her that the minister's estate as a matter of fact governed by Su concubine, hoping that she would succumb to the circumstances!

"I don't simply understand this reasoning! I clearly remember when Su concubine married in, father did not give her any status. If father had not personally called her 'Su concubine' at the gate earlier today, I'm afraid that she would only have been a tongfang girl or a this servant! Butler Zhao, giving me such a reason, the things that father said, how can you servants actually dare to oppose behind his back?" Following her questioning, Yun Qian Meng's smile gradually vanished, replaced with an expression full of nobility that made others revere her. Especially, her clear and penetrating gaze caused Butler Zhao's heart to tighten, his disdainful look immediately vanished!

"Butler Zhao, why have you stopped speaking so suddenly? Unless you mean to say that, my status is beneath that of a concubine?" When she saw Butler Zhao lower his head in silence, Yun Qian Meng unhurriedly stood up, slowly stepped in front of him and swept a biting cold gaze across the house guards behind him. She coldly snorted in her heart as her body gave off an extremely chilling aura!

"This one doesn't dare, doesn't dare! Young miss is naturally much more honorable than that concubine, it is this one's mistake, pleading young miss not to take offense! Only, today young miss called this one here, is it not for Mu Chun's matter?" Realizing that using Su Qing's authority was inconvenient, butler Zhao urgently changed the topic, then raised his hand, signalling the house guards behind him to bring Mu Chun away forcefully.....

"Hold it!" he didn't expect Yun Qian Meng to suddenly shout at them to stop their movements.....

Everyone was shocked in their hearts. One after another, they looked towards Yun Qian Meng; her expression grave and stern. Her icy-cold eyes looked straight at butler Zhao and the others, a few of the house guards actually felt growing fear in their hearts one by one.....

“I only let Shui’er inform butler of my decision, not let butler muster up a large group to come over and grab someone! Don’t tell me, I even need butler’s permission to request for just one girl?” Yun Qian Meng’s gaze was as sharp as a knife, stabbing directly at the butler.....

“Young miss, this is but Su concubine’s.....” Butler Zhao was just about to explain, when he saw that Yun Qian Meng’s eyes had suddenly turned red. She turned and walked towards the direction behind his back.....

“Nü’er greets father!” Her voice trembling, with tears spinning in her eyes, Yun Qian Meng feigned a strong appearance and bowed towards Yun Xuan Zhi that had just walked in Qi Luo Yuan.....

“What is the matter?” When he saw many house guards standing inside Qi Luo Yuan, Yun Xuan Zhi’s eyes showed some anger, even if he was not particularly affectionate towards Yun Qian Meng, she was still a lady of the household, how could he allow lowly servants to see a lady’s real face!?

When he noticed that her expression was as if she was being treated unfairly, Yun Xuan Zhi’s anger intensified. He directly stepped in front of butler Zhao, his sharp gaze made the butler’s heart shiver in fear.....

Butler Zhao had never anticipated that Yun Xuan Zhi would appear in Qi Luo Yuan at this moment. After so many years, Yun Xuan Zhi had never once stepped into Yun Qian Meng’s courtyard, moreover, he was usually uncaring towards her, these were things that everyone in the minister’s estate knew! This change was so sudden that he creased his eyebrows momentarily as he did not know how to react.

Still, he had experienced big scenes before, after all. He quickly began to respond and opened his mouth to explain, “master, this.....”

But he was once again interrupted.....

“Father, nü’er is useless, wanted a girl to serve herself, but didn’t know that minister’s estate had many rules and regulations, actually needed to get Su concubine, butler and others’ permission!” Waving for Mu Chun to stand in front of Yun Xuan Zhi, Yun Qian Meng lightly wiped her tears, gently and cautiously stated. Her previously cold eyes, were now unexpectedly flickering with fear!

“master, it’s not like this! this slave even if borrowing courage from the heavens, still doesn’t dare to order young miss around ah!” Butler Zhao saw that Yun Xuan Zhi’s expression was poor and immediately changed his story.

But the guards he brought over to Qi Luo Yuan were not things that could be erased with just words, Yun Xuan Zhi’s eyes showed an ominous glint as he looked at butler fiercely.

“Father!” Yun Qian Meng, once again quietly opened her mouth, lowered her head and softly spoke, “Father, Shui’er and Bing’er are in the end Empress Dowager’s people. Nü’er even if wronged, to keep peace within the family, cannot complain to them! But Mu Chun is a this servant of this house, even if nü’er lets anything slip, it will not fall into Empress Dowager’s ears!”

Yun Xuan Zhi had never expected that she make such a statement, his anger immediately dissipated by half. His eyes were now smiling at her as he couldn’t help but praise, “Good, Meng’er is sensible!”

Quickly exuding a prestigious aura, he looked at the butler and the guards before commanding, “Quickly scram! Listen clearly, this is the eldest young miss’s courtyard, how can you enter or leave as you please? In the future, if the eldest young miss needs anything, no need to go through Su concubine!”

“Yes, of course! Servants understand!” Butler Zhao knew that he barely avoided a calamity. He immediately answered with fear and trepidation. In no time at all, everyone of them disappeared from Yun Xuan Zhi’s sight!

After they had left, Yun Xuan Zhi turned to leave as well, only just noticing that Qi Luo Yuan was shabby and in disrepair; then saw that Yun Qian Meng pitifully only had three people to serve at her side. After a short deliberation, he said, “Someday, have butler Zhao bring some people to fix up this courtyard. Chen Wang might have cancelled the engagement, but there is still Empress Dowager’s support, don’t be too concerned about it!”

Seeing how he worriedly reminded her, Yun Qian Meng smiled coldly in her heart. Her face maintained a meek expression as personally sent off Yun Xian Zhi at the gate to the courtyard. She then bowed and deferentially said, “Nü’er understands, father please be at ease!”

Only, while Yun Qian Meng turned the winds in her favor, on the other side Su

Qing was swallowing her anger!

When Su Qing heard butler Zhao's report, her apparent gentle expression instantly showed a hint of maliciousness!

Pinching a handkerchief tightly, "Listen well, from now on, delay the monthly allowance to Qi Luo Yuan by ten days!"

She wanted to see, without the monthly allowance, how would Yun Qian Meng even survive!

Glossary

- 丫头 yatou – usually referring to a servant girl; can also mean girl, latter usually used as a form of endearment
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife; would be added to the surname of the household as a form of address; usage is similar to the English “Missus”
- 通房 tongfang – literally, passing through the room; the master of the house lets a 丫头 yatou serve him for a night; lower status than a 姨娘 yiniang
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant, another term for a servant girl; usually translated as “this slave”. The male version would be 奴才 nucai
- 相符/符 xiangfu/fu – residence or estate; the xiang in this case stands for minister, so xiangfu would be the minister’s estate
- 园 yuan – literally garden; here, it means courtyard, which is where noble women will be spending most of their time, since they can’t go out freely
- 儿 ’er – literally child; added to names as a form of affection, closeness or endearment
- 女儿 nü’er – daughter; often used by themselves in third person, because speaking in third person is respectful (and cute)

(Edit: I made a huge mistake! Housekeeper Zhang’s name was actually housekeeper Zhao! Even if he doesn’t deserve to have his name remembered correctly, all instances of Zhang have been replaced with the correct reading of Zhao. My apologies!)

(Edit: I was advised that Zhao’s position 管家 guanjia was more equivalent to the role of a **butler** in feudal China. It certainly makes sense, since he seems to hold a rather high position amongst the servants. Might take a bit to get used to it.)

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 7

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“Young miss, it’s dinner time!” The moon had risen and it was almost nine o’clock before Mu Chun carried the evening meal into Qi Luo Yuan.

Yun Qian Meng glanced across the barely furnished room, her eyes flashed with an understanding brilliance.

“Heavens! How is this food even fit for young miss? Out of the question! this servant will look for the kitchen manager right away!” Mu Chun opened the boxed meal to find only two small plates of vegetables and a bowl of rice gruel. Her anger flared up immediately and she turned to leave.....

“Mu Chun!” She was unexpectedly stopped by Yun Qian Meng.

The three girls saw her calmly sit at the round table, slowly and gracefully pick up the chopsticks to eat the small plates of bean sprouts and cabbage, then elegantly finish drinking the gruel!

“Young miss, master just scolded butler Zhao this afternoon, but these this slave are really too much! They will actually go so far just to play dirty tricks for even one evening meal!” Mu Chun’s eyes turned red when she saw her mistress suffer such injustice in a calm and relaxed manner.

Even though she understood in her heart that her young miss was enduring hardships every day in the minister’s estate, she didn’t expect them to be this impudent!

Right now, they still had the Empress Dowager’s protection; if one day the Empress Dowager was no more..... Won’t the young miss be swallowed whole by those filthy wolves?!

The more she thought about this, the more distinct the anger on Mu Chun's face.

But Yun Qian Meng had finished the bowl of rice gruel without saying a word, she was presently wiping her lips with a handkerchief. She then smiled at Mu Chun speaking naturally, "Right now, my forehead is wounded. It is wiser to avoid dishes with excessive meat and fish. If you took notice of this now, they will definitely scold you saying that you're biting the hand that feeds! Wait a few more days. When my wound is healed, and they continue with this treatment, you're free to hound them!"

Hearing Yun Qian Meng's analysis, Mu Chun and the others were secretly shocked! They looked at her with a somewhat incredible expression.

Mu Chun's at the moment was no longer angry but very touched. She looked at Yun Qian Meng with pleasant surprise.

After waiting for so many years, her young miss had finally grown up; thoroughly and maturely thinking things through while maintaining her composure, it seemed that Su concubine's days are numbered!

On the other hand, Shui'er and Bing'er exchanged a look. Compared to Mu Chun's excitement, even though they were quite startled, they still managed to appear much calmer.

Yun Qian Meng observed their expressions carefully without showing any emotion. All of a sudden, she asked, "Shui'er, Bing'er, when I woke up at the imperial palace today, I only saw Qiu Lian. Why didn't I see you two?"

Their bodies obviously froze. They didn't expect her to ask them such a question, causing them to stare blankly for a moment.

That said, these two were still people trained by the Empress Dowager. They quickly recovered. Shui'er immediately lowered her head and answered deferentially, "When that happened to young miss, Empress Dowager was terribly furious; both of us this servant were taken for questioning."

Yun Qian Meng calmly listened to her answer, but did not continue. Instead, she dully looked at the both of them. Only after a quite a while, did she command, "Mu Chun, clean up the table; Shui'er and Bing'er, prepare the water

for my bath!”

“Yes!”, the three of them immediately started working. Yun Qian Meng instead got up to enter her bedroom.

Her severe gaze swept across the bedroom to find that it was only furnished with a bed and a dressing table. She slowly waked towards the window. Taking this time when her girl were busy with work to compose her train of thoughts.

She did not believe Shui’er’s earlier answer, but the way she had answered so naturally, and the fact that she really needed people to serve by her side, meant that there was no reason yet to expose her.

Just think! When their own niece is between life and death, what kind of aunt didn’t even come over to take a look?

Even more illogically, at those critical moments, the Empress Dowager actually had heart to interrogate two girl?!

She was afraid that the inherited memories of the Empress Dowager being nice to Yun Qian Meng were just wishful thoughts!

Otherwise, why would Empress Dowager not give her the Gold Medallion, instead choosing to give it to Shui’er and Bing’er? There’s no way Empress Dowager wouldn’t know that the medallion had even more influence if it was in her own hands!

No, Empress Dowager knew clearly; her heart was very clear! She feared that the Empress Dowager had other plans, hence the unwillingness to give her the Gold Medallion!

Looking at how the sky suddenly darkened, Yun Qian Meng expression flashed with ferocity. It seems that the minister’s estate and the palace were both full of danger. The people that you thought were the closest to you, are actually the ones that harbor the most evil intentions! If you didn’t advance step by step with extreme caution, then you would only become the food in their mouths!

“Young miss, should I help you undress for the bath?” Mu Chun came over at this moment, supporting Yun Qian Meng to the dressing table and prepared to help her undress!

Under the light of dusk, Yun Qian Meng saw a fourteen or fifteen-year-old young lady in the mirror. This was the first time she could evaluate the appearance of her current body. She only saw that even though her complexion was pale, it could not hide the beauty underneath. A pair of glittering black eyes adorned her meager egg-shaped face. Under the gloomy lighting, her eyes were even more dazzling than diamonds; her lips had lost some color, but were still tender and full. Coupled with naturally full and dark eyebrows, her face seemed to form a beautiful painting!

At this moment, Mu Chun had helped her let down her long hair. Just looking at the supple, silky, bright black hair that collapsed like a waterfall on both her shoulders, the contrast with her delicate facial features made her appearance even more lovely!

Even though she was wearing old clothes, there was no difficulty noticing how her figure had elegant curves in all the right places, especially her slender waist that can be grasped easily; it seemed that her figure was far above and beyond the norm!

Unfortunately, Yun Qian Meng had been malnourished for a long time. Although her skin was pale white and soft, it didn't have any gloss or shine to it, resulting in a lifeless and spiritless atmosphere; completely lacking in vigor or vitality!

Especially now, with gauze still wrapped around her forehead. Noticing that the gauze was not wrapped neatly at all, she realized that when she had fainted, she had been carried off hastily and carelessly!

Perhaps none of the people there had any thoughts about the condition of Yun Qian Meng who was at death's door!

Sensing that Mu Chun wanted to continue taking off her white inner clothes, Yun Qian Meng unsteadily leaned from side to side, then walked behind a screen by herself before saying, "Go to the study, report to father that I want to hire a physician to prescribe some medicine!"

"Yes! this servant will ask Shui'er and Bing'er to help young miss bathe!" Mu Chun could not help but worry about her young miss not having people by her side.

Yun Qian Meng paused while unbuttoning her clothes, then immediately said, "No need, have them stand guard at the entrance!"

"Yes! this servant shall withdraw!" Under her persistence, Mu Chun didn't speak anymore. She turned around, helped close the door properly and walked towards the study.....

At that moment, in the study, Su Qing was panting heavily while lying on Yun Xian Zhi's body. She lightly drew patterns on his stomach with her slender fingers and mumbled, "Xuan Zhi, that daughter of yours seems to have changed! Earlier today she embarrassed us at the gate of the minister's estate, then you even commanded that her matters no longer needed my approval. I fear that the after today, the minister's estate will be turned into a terrible mess by her!"

Yun Xian Zhi obviously knew what Su Qing was thinking in her heart, but still, he had never entered Yun Qian Meng's courtyard before. When he saw it today, he realized that she was very much pitiful!

It was often said that children without parents are the most pitiful. Even though there was Su Qing, they were still separated by flesh and blood, how could she love Qian Meng with all her heart?!

Additionally, Empress Dowager had clearly spoken, he himself did not have the freedom to do as he pleased; even if he didn't have much parental affection for Yun Qian Meng, he still had to keep up good appearances!

Holding Su Qing's hand in his, he spoke in a low voice, "Just bear it for a while! She can't stay in the minister's estate for the rest of her life, sooner or later, Empress Dowager will find her a match and she will be married off!"

Hearing his speech, Su Qing showed extreme displeasure and sat up from his bosom. Her face seemed to say that she was being wronged. "What do you mean with those words? As if I can't even tolerate her?! You saw how she was today, that girl looked like she could eat people! Xue'er was terrified, even now she hasn't eaten her dinner!"

When she finished, she collected the garments scattered all over the floor and started to dress herself.....

And Yun Xian Zhi, hearing that his favorite daughter did not have dinner yet,

immediately expressed a pained look. He quickly hugged Su Qing from behind and promised, “I’ll go see Xue’er in a while! Can’t you see that I still love you? If I really wanted to confine you, would you be in ye’s study?”

Done persuading, he reached out and pinched Su Qing’s delicate face. Both of them were laughing playfully when Mu Chun’s voice sounded from outside the door.....

“master, young miss wants to hire a physician, what does master think about it?” Mu Chun evidently heard the voices from the couple inside, hence she did not rudely enter the study and only asked from outside the door!

“Allowed!” Yun Xuan Zhi’s calm and unhurried voice traveled out from within the study, then he took no more notice of Mu Chun.....

Glossary

- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl
- 奴才 nucai – slave servant
- 丫头 yatou – girl/servant girl
- 老爷 laoye – old master; the head of the house, the master of the xiangfu would be Yun Xuan Zhi; because he's a minister, he can also be called 相爷 xiangye; same meaning, really
- 爷 ye – I, grandfather, master; in this chapter, Yun Xuan Zhi uses it to refer to himself
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate
- Gold Medallion 金牌 jinpai – this was given the Shui'er and Bing'er by the Empress Dowager; it carries some status, as the people who carry one are usually related to the imperial family; no one will mess with them

(TL Note: This chapter used many Chinese proverbs to describe things. Many adjectives!)

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Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 8

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When Mu Chun returned, Yun Qian Meng had already freshened up and was reclining on the bed, resting with her eyes closed.

Seeing her exhausted appearance, Mu Chun thought to blow out the candles and leave quietly. Unexpectedly, Yun Qian Meng chose this moment to ask, “How was it?”

Hearing her question, Mu Chun took the candle and arrived at the side of the bed. She repeated everything she had heard one time!

“Young miss, it looks as if master’s heart still holds deep affection for Su concubine!” When she saw how Yun Qian Meng didn’t say anything after listening to her report, Mu Chun’s heart pained at the suffering of this injustice!

Clearly today, the young miss was injured and then further humiliated by Suconcubine, but master only appeared to punish Su concubine in the public eye, instead he continued to fawn over her behind closed doors! It seemed that the evening meal was also one of Su concubine’s tricks!

“Mu Chun, these things can’t be said in front of others!” Hearing how unsatisfied she felt, Yun Qian Meng’s heart had a warm feeling.

Even though she had only interacted with Mu Chun for half a day, she knew that other than Mu Chun, no one else could be more loyal to her in the minister’s estate that was governed by Su concubine!

You could say that ever since Yun Meng came to this West Chu guo, until now, the only one she could trust was Mu Chun!

As a result, she definitely couldn’t let her have a loose tongue; when all is said

and done, she only had one trustworthy worker by her side!

Of course Mu Chun didn't expect Yun Qian Meng to care for her instead. She couldn't keep her feelings of gratitude from showing on her face. She quickly nodded, then moved over to the dressing table, taking out the few remaining pieces of silver from a small wooden box. After counting, she asked, "Young miss, how about sending a few this servant to the market to buy some fresh vegetables for you to eat tomorrow?"

Yun Qian Meng looked at Mu Chun's lowered right hand, seeing only a few small pieces of silver, asked, "How many days until the monthly allowance?"

Mu Chun looked slightly distracted as she was thinking before answering "The third day every month! Today is already the twenty-eighth!"

Yun Qian Meng slightly nodded after listening, she pondered for a while longer before she finally said, "Let's save the money for now! Let's just follow whatever the kitchen has prepared for these few days! You must be tired today, bring Shui'er and Bing'er to go have a rest!"

Mu Chun understood immediately, thinking that young miss was definitely saving for a rainy day. After all, even with master's word, if Su concubine wanted to find a way to cause trouble for them, it was as easy as taking candy from a baby! She immediately wrapped up the silver pieces and returned them to the small wooden box, then, she stepped out of Yun Qian Meng's bedroom.

Mu Chun's departure didn't let Yun Qian Meng go right into dreamland, rather, her train of thought was unprecedentedly clear!

Only, the clearer her thoughts, the more her heart felt heavy with worry.

As a person from modern times, crossing over to an era not recorded in history, and the original owner of her body having no knowledge of worldly affairs, meant that she had a very low understanding of the current society!

Right now, with only Mu Chun by her side, how could she break away from all of these customs and trivialities, then protect her own well-being.....

She didn't know if it was because she lost too much blood, but her unceasing thoughts helped her gradually submerge into the folds of sleep.....

However, on the next day, before the skies were even bright, loud and heavy footsteps sounded from outside.

Yun Qian Meng used one hand to prop up her body; she squinted out the window, yawned lightly and shouted at the door, “Mu Chun!”

“Young miss, you’re awake!” Hearing the shout, Mu Chun immediately waked into the room, her hands carrying a basin of water for washing the face and a handkerchief.

Yun Qian Meng lightly kneaded her aching forehead, and asked with some temper, “What time is it now? Why is there such a loud racket outside?”

“Answering young miss, that butler Zhao brought some artisans into Qi Luo Yuan at three quarters past three! He says he’s following orders from master to fix up young miss’s buildings!” Finishing, Mu Chun helped her off the bed, carefully tending to her as she washed her face and dressed up.

Yun Qian Meng was smiling coldly in her heart. It seemed that this butler Zhao was a person with a narrow mind. He just lost some face here last night; but already made plans to get revenge today!

He knew that she was unwell and needed rest, so he purposely got people to start working before the sun had even risen! It was too obvious!

Only, did he really think that she was such a pushover, that she would let him turn her courtyard upside-down?

If she doesn’t make him terrified of her, then her former career as a drug trafficking police captain could be considered a joke!

Opening the wooden windows with one hand, Yun Qian Meng, from the second floor, saw through the faint lighting that a dozen of workers were lifting some tools into Qi Luo Yuan. That butler Zhao just stood at one side and loudly shouted while pointing, “Hurry! Hurry! Able to work inside the minister’s estate can be considered your ancestors collected some luck! All of you be more meticulous! This is the eldest young miss’s courtyard, don’t make too much noise!”

Didn’t know if he was doing it on purpose or not, but that butler made sure to especially mention ‘eldest young miss’ to the young laborers. Apparently, there

was some hidden meaning to his words!

With such an obvious provocation, and another two house guards standing behind him, even Mu Chun, who was behind Yun Qian Meng could not help but frown. It seems that this butler Zhao really didn't have a good heart!

"Let's go, we'll entertain him!" Yun Qian Meng looked coldly at butler Zhao's performance, then quickly shut the windows, before gracefully strolling towards the middle of the courtyard.....

Yun Qian Meng's appearance caused all of the young laborers who were just in full swing slowly stop their work one after another!

None of them had ever seen a young lady from a noble family. Seeing the young miss of the minister's estate today, plus her appearance was even much more beautiful than in other drawings, all of those young men were unable to stop themselves from blushing.....

Butler Zhao noticed everyone of their looks, his eyes flickering with a malicious glint, stepped up quickly before giving Yun Qian Meng a slight bow. He overtly spoke deferentially, "Why is young miss up so early? Is it because these servants were too noisy that woke you up?"

Yun Qian Meng played along with butler Zhao, saying unsympathetically, "Butler Zhao really works hard! The sky is still dark and you're already so busy!"

Seeing that she didn't have anything else to say, he couldn't restrain the giddy expression from showing on his face, but the words he spoke were extremely modest, "Young miss has praised wrongly! These are master's orders, so they are also the things us servants should do! How unfortunate that young miss's rest has been disturbed, this servant feels very apologetic!"

While those were his words, butler Zhao's heartfelt thoughts were completely different! If she tried to bring this matter up with master today, he would have both reason and proof on his side!

After listening to him, Yun Qian Meng nodded. Taking another look at the young laborers who were still staring at her, her heart was unable to endure. She suddenly asked, "Be that as it may, it seems that butler Zhao has yet to wake up. Must have unexpectedly misheard father's words last night."

She played down her statement, but butler Zhao's heart suddenly started beating hard like it was in a tempest! His extremely cunning plan that he thought of from what Yun Xuan Zhi said to him last night, could there really be a loophole or a handle within it?!

Noticing that he had gone quiet, Yun Qian Meng flashed a cold expression. Her eyes cold, she calmly shouted, "Butler Zhao has the nerve! How dare you bring strange, unfamiliar men into minister's estate's womenfolk's courtyard?! What punishment do you deserve?!"

Being scolded by Yun Qian Meng, butler Zhao had an extremely foolish expression. After thinking back on Yun Xuan Zhi's words last night, he relaxed slightly. Grinning widely, he asked, "Young miss, master really did tell this slave to mend Qi Luo Yuan, this slave is only following the orders from the zhuzi! Eldest young miss, why are you trying to make a mountain out of a molehill?"

Glossary

- 主子 zhuzi – the masters of the household; the 奴婢 nubi and the 奴才 nucai work under contract for their 主子 zhuzi; legal slavery
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl
- 奴才 nucai – slave servant; referring to themselves in third person is a form of debasement
- 老爷 laoye, 相爷 xiangye – old master, master; the head of the house
- 相符 xiangfu – the estate
- 园 yuan – literally garden; here, it means courtyard, which is where noble women will be spending most of their time, since they can't go out freely
- 国 guo – country; Yun Qian Meng is apparently now in 'West Chu Country'; I don't actually know if the emperor had authority over all of Chu or not.

(Edit: I made a huge mistake! Housekeeper Zhang's name was actually housekeeper Zhao! Even if he doesn't deserve to have his name remembered correctly, all instances of Zhang have been replaced with the correct reading of Zhao. My apologies!)

(Edit: I was advised that Zhao's position 管家 guanjia was more equivalent to the role of a **butler** in feudal China. It certainly makes sense, since he seems to hold a rather high position amongst the servants. Might take a bit to get used to it.)

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 9

Chu Wang Fei – Chapter 9

Yun Qian Meng stared coldly at butler Zhao's widely grinning face; she had planned well in her heart!

When Mu Chun saw how gleefully smug the vile butler Zhao looked, her heart was immediately filled with contempt! She was ready to stride up before him to argue, when she received a sideways glance from Yun Qian Meng.

Understanding tacitly, she set her mind at rest and stood back at her original position. She no longer felt like meddling!

"Then in butler Zhao's opinion, ben young miss's real face being exposed to unfamiliar men is some small and insignificant matter? This concerns ben young miss's dignity and reputation! For butler Zhao to be so unexpectedly sloppy in his job, what do you mean caring?! What do you mean apologetic?!"

As the saying goes, nobody could slap a smiling face!

(a Chinese saying that claims if you smile and apologize first, the other party would not have the heart to punish you)

Butler Zhao thought if he kept smiling widely, Yun Qian Meng would give him face!

But he was counting his chickens before they were hatched. She not only maintained a chilly expression, but also had convicted him of his crime from the very start!

Butler Zhao had been tyrannically abusing his powers since Su concubine started to govern the minister's estate. At this moment, his face paled; the grin he originally wore on his face was frozen, but he didn't want Yun Qian Meng to

expose the fury buried inside his heart. For a moment, his face displayed all the colors of the rainbow, causing the watching Mu Chun to choke on her laughter.

As for Yun Qian Meng's questions, he didn't dare to remain careless; the smile on his face gradually withdrew. He stood still in a flash, a dangerous glint in his eyes as he spoke, "Young miss, why are you making things difficult for us servants? We are just listening to zhuzi's commands! Moreover, as long as you don't leave your bedroom, nobody can see your real face!"

He did not expect not only did she not get angry after hearing what he said, she laughed instead! After some mild giggling, she spoke again with a calm, cold voice, "If such a thing were to happen to Yun Ruo Xue, even if butler Zhao was lent ten times as many guts, you wouldn't dare to do anything, right?! Furthermore, does butler Zhao still remember the reason father punished Su concubine last night?!"

The time was now just about early morning. Besides the sounds of clucking chickens from afar, Qi Luo Yuan, this remote courtyard, was as silent as the grave. Hence, Yun Qian Meng's rhetoric was heard loudly and clearly by everyone. Butler Zhao's face once again paled, the viciousness in his eyes scattered, leaving behind a scorched look.

"Su concubine, despite being part of the womenfolk of, left the estate without explicit permission, thus was sentenced by father to be confined at her quarters for ten days! Right now, you, butler Zhao, brazenly brought males into my Qi Luo Yuan, in an attempt to ruin my young miss's purity and reputation! If these words were to somehow reach Empress Dowager's ears. butler Zhao can only imagine how you will be killed!"

Yun Qian Meng had no intention of giving him any chances to explain his actions; openly convicting him of these crimes. Her actions caused even the dozens of men behind the butler Zhao to lose all the color in their faces!

They might be the lowest of the low in society, but the deep-rooted feudal way of thinking has ingrained in their minds one basic principle. The imperial power was as high as the sky!

When they heard this good-looking young lady spit out the two words 'Empress Dowager', all of them immediately snapped out of their charmed state.

Immediately, in rapid succession, they all lowered their heads; they no longer dared to gaze fixedly at Yun Qian Meng!

Butler Zhao, despite his endless scheming, had not expected Yun Qian Meng to find Su Qing's punishment as a justification; much less that she would manage to connect two completely unrelated matters!

However, in this case, he did not have the option to confess his mistake! With Yun Qian Meng's current temperament, even if he confessed, she still wouldn't let him go!

It would be better for him to deny desperately in the face of death! As long as he could convince others that he had no selfish motives, then even with the backing of the Empress Dowager, there was nothing she could do to him without any hard evidence!

Moreover, Qi Luo Yuan was in the deepest part of the minister's estate, and he had his men guard the entrance. Right now, nobody knew if Yun Qian Meng could even take a step out of this place!

Thinking that way, butler Zhao breathed out a sigh of relief. He quickly adopted a selfless expression, then brightly said, "Young miss, don't tell me that you plan to convict this slave based on your conjectures alone? Don't tell me young miss isn't afraid of disappointing everyone in the minister's estate? What's more, the Empress Dowager's daily matters are of the utmost importance; how could there be time for these small matters? Young miss is also a well-bred lady of nobility, how can you leave the estate and enter the palace to bother the Empress Dowager every day?!"

His words sounded righteous to the point of reverence, but Yun Qian Meng still felt his words were disdainful!

It looks as if this butler Zhao was not only stiff and stubborn, but also a craven and cowardly person. This kind of rogue, what right did he have to manage anything in the minister's estate?

This butler Zhao even had the audacity to place a few of his guards outside her courtyard; her heart was incomparably chilly!

"Shui'er!", she shouted, causing butler Zhao to look puzzledly at Shui'er that

had stepped forward. His scheming heart tried to figure out what play Yun Qian Meng would make next!

“What are young miss’s orders?!” Both Shui’er and Bing’er had been here for half a day; their hearts had long since felt deeply disgusted by the shameless and disgraceful butler Zhao. Now that the young miss had called for them personally, she stepped up immediately to prepare for the errand.

“Ben young miss has a splitting headache, go bring the Empress Dowager’s gold medallion to the palace and hire a physician. If the Empress Dowager asks you anything, remember everything that has happened here these two days, report them clearly, one by one, for the Empress Dowager to hear!” Yun Qian Meng understood in her heart that against people like butler Zhao, words alone won’t be enough to handle him!

But the Empress Dowager’s gold medallion was different. It held the power to determine a person’s life or death! Even Yun Xian Zhi would have apprehensions when faced against it, what more of a lowly butler!

Shui’er too, was intelligent, and quickly pulled out the gold medal from within her sleeves. By now the sun had already risen, the light of dawn pierced through layers of clouds towards the land; the golden medallion in Shui’er’s hands flickered as it reflected the light, momentarily blinding butler Zhao.....

Only now, butler Zhao finally realized that he was actually in mortal peril! Both of his legs were uncontrollably shivering, he glanced at Yun Qian Meng’s unchanging cold expression, and immediately kneeled towards her.....

“Young miss, spare my life! Young miss, please spare my life! This one is only a this slave, thought wholeheartedly to let young miss dwell in a spacious and shining new house! Absolutely no ill intentions! Young miss, please perceive the truth!” At this point, butler Zhao finally realized why Yun Xuan Zhi had treated the young miss so differently last night compared to the past. He had been too focused on getting his revenge for the events last night that he hadn’t had time to mull over Yun Xuan Zhi’s change in attitude!

To only realize it now, he really didn’t even have time to regret!

Now, Yun Qian Meng was no longer the meek, cowardly and softhearted young girl that had never set foot outside the boudoir. Faced with butler Zhao’s

persistent pleas for forgiveness, her expression was completely unmoved. She glanced at Shui'er to see that she had put away the gold medallion and advanced towards the exit without a trace of hesitation.....

“Greetings to master!”, just stepping out of the yuan, Shui'er saw Yun Xuan Zhi hurriedly advance towards her!

Having heard Shui'er's call, his heart shivered slightly with cold, then he immediately presented a cold smile.

It seems, contrary to expectations, Yun Xuan Zhi had very keen foresight. As soon as he knew that the people in his own minister's estate were going to be punished via the Empress Dowager, he immediately came to obstruct it!

Then, finding out what butler Zhao was doing today, his heart knew that things were bad, so he had immediately sent someone to the palace to take sick leave, then hurriedly rushed to the backyard!

After all, the Empress Dowager's maternal family, the Qu family could be said to have the most influence at the moment; he naturally could not show any conflict with the Empress Dowager!

“Greetings to father!”, having swept her gaze at the visibly more relaxed expression on butler Zhao, Yun Qian Meng calmly walked ahead, gracefully completed a bow towards Yun Xuan Zhi, then quietly stood at his side.

Yun Xuan Zhi noticed that she looked like she was unwilling to speak further; he couldn't help but crease his eyebrows inwardly.

He was too busy comforting Su Qing yesterday, so he forgot to warn butler Zhao who, unexpectedly, had stirred up so much trouble for him today!

Thinking this way, Yun Xuan Zhi glared at the troublemaking butler Zhao and loudly shouted, “Lairen! Drive all of these workers out for benxiang! As for butler Zhao, in spite of benxiang's orders yesterday, bothered young miss's recuperation at his own accord. Lairen! Drag him down and beat heavily for twenty sticks! His salary will be cut off for half a year!”

Butler Zhao heard that his life was preserved, and that Yun Xuan Zhi was protecting him. He regained his happy expression, ready to thank profusely for the favor but was unexpectedly interrupted by Yun Qian Meng's voice!

“Father, this butler zhang is arrogant without measure; ignored your orders previously, then damaged nü’er’s reputation. If father is too forgiving, then in the future, the servants in the minister’s estate will be undisciplined and uncontrollable!”, Yun Qian Meng was still looking straight ahead, her voice was not too fast, not too slow, but each of her words were as sharp as knives, compelling Yun Xuan Zhi to punish butler Zhao more fiercely!

Hearing that, butler Zhao and Yun Xuan Zhi stared blankly at each other. Butler Zhao eyes were pleading desperately at him, but he could only furrow his brows and speak somewhat awkwardly, “Then what is Meng’er’s wish?”

Now that Yun Xuan Zhi passed the difficult questions to her, she unexpectedly flashed a brilliant smile, then spoke with feigned naivety, “Just wondered who recommended butler Zhao to work, that person should also be held responsible! After all, minister’s estate is not just any residence. If people were to lead the wolves inside the house, then the West Chu guo will lose daddy who is one of the supporting pillars of the country!”

Yun Xuan Zhi definitely did not expect her to take things to the next level!

Thinking back on how butler Zhao was recommended to him by Su Qing, and knowing that he couldn’t bear to let her feel unhappy, he only swept his gaze across the piteously begging butler before speaking heartlessly, “Since that is the case, Meng’er’s way is good, but it still takes time to find a new butler from scratch. Why don’t we keep butler Zhao for now, when daddy finds a suitable replacement, he will be dismissed!”

After listening, Yun Qian Meng looked at his ashen face and understood that if she would be met with resistance if she pressured him any further. So she nodded and said, “Let’s follow father’s wishes!”

As soon as she was done speaking, she ignored the rest of the people in the courtyard and led her own girl back into her loft.....

Glossary

- 本 ben – I, me; often used before the status or position of the speaker when they are talking down to someone of a lower status than them; Qian Meng uses 本小姐 ben xiaojie – this lady; Xuan Zhi uses 本相 ben xiang – this minister; all of these are used when the speaker is demanding respect from the listener
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 来人 lairen – come, people; the zhuzi commands all the servants nearby to come over before giving them their orders; usually used to direct a large number of servants at once
- 儿 ‘er – child; added to names as a form of affection, closeness or endearment
- 主子 zhuzi – the masters of the household;
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl
- 奴才 nucai – slave servant; referring to themselves in third person is a form of debasement
- 老爷 laoye, 相爷 xiangye – old master, master; the head of the house
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister’s estate
- Gold Medallion 金牌 jinpai – this was given the Shui’er and Bing’er by the Empress Dowager; it carries some status, as the people who carry one are usually related to the imperial family; no one will mess with them
- 园 yuan – literally garden; here, it means courtyard, which is where noble women will be spending most of their time, since they can’t go out freely
- 国 guo – country; the story is set in ‘West Chu Country’
- 后院 houyuan – the backyard or inner yard of the residence; the womenfolk: concubines, daughters, are generally not allowed to leave the houyuan of their own accord; something about women’s rights

(TL Note: Zhao was described to have been overly pleased with his own

cleverness. That's what I'm trying to deliver with the phrase 'gleefully smug'.)

(Edit: I made a huge mistake! Butler Zhang's name was actually butler Zhao! Even if he doesn't deserve to have his name remembered correctly, all instances of Zhang have been replaced with the correct reading of Zhao. My apologies!)

(Edit: I was advised that Zhao's position 管家 guanjia was more equivalent to the role of a **butler** in feudal China. It certainly makes sense, since he seems to hold a rather high position amongst the servants. Might take a bit to get used to it.)

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 10

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Everything that happened on those two days had immediately spread through the minister's estate, raising a huge commotion not unlike that of a tempest.

Especially now, master, unexpectedly, personally ordered the flogging of butler Zhao just to comfort the eldest young miss; this caused everyone in the minister's estate to be brimming with curiosity at the eldest young miss who had incongruously become more valiant and courageous after having her engagement with Chen Wang annulled.

All kinds of different versions of Yun Qian Meng were floating out of the mouths of many different people, so much so that some of the more superstitious people, actually believed that the eldest young miss had been possessed by spirits. For a while, the people on the minister's estate kept a high guard, many of them fearing that they too would be a victim of demonic possession.

Regarding all of this, Su Qing only listened and did not speak. Even though butler Zhao was one of her trusted aides, when she heard about his punishment, she remained silent as before, just bringing Yun Ruo Xue along for a quiet breakfast.

"Mum, are you really not going to care? This Yun Qian Meng really considers herself a strong individual? Does she think that she can lord over others just because she has the Empress Dowager's gold medallion? To think that in the past, whenever she saw us, she would lower herself quietly!" Listening to the report from the girl outside, Yun Ruo Xue heavily slammed her bowl and chopsticks on the table; her eyes held streaks of sinister light, and her face was

flushing with fury.

But Su Qing continued to eat, her expression unchanged. When she saw that Yun Ruo Xue looked like she was about to lose her cool, she put down her own bowl, swept a look at Liu concubine and the third young miss who had come to pay her respects, and calmly said, “Ruo Xue, don’t lose your bearings. Since that was your daddy’s decision, there’s no need for us to speak out of turn.”

Moreover, butler Zhao was one of the people she had picked up personally; how could she not know that he was the type of person who never lets go of any grudges?

What Yun Xuan Zhi did today, while appearing to be doting on Yun Qian Meng, was actually just giving face to the Empress Dowager.

It seemed that this time, if he personally stepped forth to clarify the replacement of butler Zhao, he would hurt their marital affection, letting that girl, Yun Qian Meng, to drill a hole into their relationship.

Taking note of Su Qing’s meaningful glance, Yun Ruo Xue cleverly stopped talking about Yun Qian Meng, instead, she stood up, slowly walked in front of Liu concubine who was still bowing at the entrance, and grabbed the third young miss’s chin with her slender, lily-white hands; sizing her up softly.

“Pfft.....”, her somewhat flattering expression from before was unexpectedly replaced with light laughter, “Mum, this san younger sister has become quite pretty. Now that san younger sister is all grown up, shouldn’t mum hurry up and find her a good family?”

Yun Ruo Xue’s words were like a bolt from the blue. The third young miss, Yun Yan’s face which was originally blushing red visibly paled into a deathly white. She couldn’t help but to look towards her mother for help.

“Missus, Yan’er is still young. In terms of appearance, it’s still Ruo Xue young miss whose beauty is capable of causing the downfall of a city.” Liu concubine spoke in fear and trepidation, nervously probing Su Qing’s expression with her eyes.

“Liu concubine is too modest. I see that Yan’er has really blossomed into a lovely and moving flower. Even though her status is of shu birth, as long as it’s

not some rich family, with master's position, being matched with a commoner is certainly possible. I think the eldest son of butler Zhao would actually be a pretty good choice." Su Qing's words that decided the rest of Yun Yan's life were unchanged despite the kneeling Liuconcubine's desperate pleas.

"Please, Missus! We, mother and daughter, are content with our current lives living in the minister's estate together for so many years. I beg you to have some mercy, let Yan'er stay by my side for another few years." Liu concubine inched towards Su Qing's feet while on her knees, knocking her head on the floor non-stop, hoping that she would change her mind.

And Yun Yan had long since had her face full of tears as she sat paralyzed on the ground.

Who didn't know that butler Zhao's eldest son was extremely promiscuous? He had already taken in a dozen or more women as wives and concubines yet still spent most of his days wandering in and out of brothels! This decision would ruin the rest of her life, how could she be so vicious!

"What are you doing, Liu concubine? Could it be that you're displeased with this marriage arrangement? Don't be so shameless, try thinking about your own status, how dare you be so picky? Someday, I will let butler Zhao personally come forward to propose. Yun Yan becoming a concubine of the Zhao family, is already set in stone." Kicking away Liu concubine, Su Qing stood with an unkind expression and turned, leaving the old female servants in the room to drive away the endlessly pleading mother and daughter.

Now that her anger was vented out, Yun Ruo Xue was in a much better mood and returned to the table to continue eating her breakfast slowly, "Mum, that Yun Yan and her mother are of no threat to us. Why did you plan to wed her to that ruffian as a concubine?"

Su Qing saw her daughter's puzzled expression and smiled, then lightly poked her forehead with a finger, speaking indulgently, "Sometimes, these people are the most crucial. Your mum can't let get any ideas, so why not have Yun Yan become a daughter-in-law of the Zhao family? That way, butler Zhao will remain loyal to us."

Yun Ruo Xue heard this and immediately burst out a bright smile, coquettishly

snuggled into Su Qing's bosom, and said lovingly, "Still can't compare to mum's foresight."

Su Qing hugged her daughter, gently stroking her supple black hair with a distant look while she ruminated. Thinking back, if those heavy-handed yahuan were not around, then it wouldn't be possible.....

A few days later, Yun Qian Meng was slowly getting used to the lifestyle of the ancient times.

Without Su Qing and butler zhang's disturbance, Qi Luo Yuan although slightly simple and crude, but the passing of days was still relaxed and comfortable.

And Yun Qian Meng had taken advantage of this leisurely time to familiarize herself with the people within her memories.

"young miss!" Mu Chun could be seen running over from far away.

"What matter has made you so flustered?", she asked when she saw Mu Chun's labored breathing.

"young miss, this servant just went to the accounting room to collect the monthly allowance. Who knew, the accounting mister said that our Qi Luo Yuan had no monthly allowance to collect." Gradually catching her breath, Mu Chun indignantly spoke, "this servant went yesterday, they said the money wasn't ready and asked us to wait. Going today, they said the same thing. this servant asked around while coming back, everyone else had collected the allowance yesterday. We are the only ones they avoided paying!"

"Oh? So there's no monthly allowance to collect?" Closing the book in her hands, Yun Qian Meng squinted her eyes, her lips curved into a cold smile.

Su Qing had governed the minister's estate for so long, her influence had crept into every corner. Even though Yun Xuan Zhi had given his orders, Su Qing still had all kinds of ways to cause problems for her.

Only, Yun Qian Meng was all too happy to accept all of these challenges. As long as she could pit her wits against Su Qing for a while, then these quiet days would be even more interesting!

"young miss, there's one other thing. Butler Zhao was reportedly preparing

gifts recently, hearsay is that he wants to propose a marriage from master.” After a few moments of silence, Mu Chun managed to tell her of the news she had heard.

“young miss, Liu concubine brought third young miss over to pay respects.” Just as she had finished, Shui’er who was guarding outside brought over a haggard-looking and worried Liu concubine and Yun Yan.

Glossary

- 妹妹 meimei – younger sister; 三妹妹 san meimei – means third (younger) sister
- 丫头 yatou – usually referring to a servant girl; can also mean girl, latter usually used as a form of endearment
- 丫鬟 yahuan – servant girls
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife; would be added to the surname of the household as a form of address; usage is similar to the English “Missus”
- 庶 shu – of common birth; in this setting, it means born to a concubine
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 婆子 pozi – older female servants
- 儿 ‘er – child; added to names as a form of affection, closeness or endearment
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; referring to themselves in third person is a form of debasement
- 老爷 laoye, 相爷 xiangye – old master, master; the head of the house
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister’s estate
- Gold Medallion 金牌 jinpai – a gold medal that carries authority from the imperial family
- 园 yuan – literally garden; here, it means courtyard

(Edit: I was advised that Zhao’s position 管家 guanjia was more equivalent to the role of a butler in feudal China. It certainly makes sense, since he seems to hold a rather high position amongst the servants. Might take a bit to get used to it.)

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 11

Glossary

- 妹妹 meimei – younger sister; 三妹妹 san meimei – means third (younger) sister
- 姐姐 jiejie – elder sister; can be added to names to show respect or a close relationship; 大姐姐 da jiejie – the eldest sister in the family
- 嫡 di – related to the first wife, the children born of the first wife have higher standing
- 丫头 yatou – usually referring to a servant girl; can also mean girl, latter usually used as a form of endearment
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 儿 'er – child; added to names as a form of affection, closeness or endearment
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; referring to themselves in third person is a form of debasement
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife; would be added to the surname of the household as a form of address; usage is similar to the English “Missus”
- 庶 shu – of common birth; in this setting, it means born to a concubine
- 婆子 pozi – older female servants
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

(TL Note: I'm trying to leave some terms untranslated if they're used as names,

to give a better feeling of how the characters are speaking and how close they are to each other. If anyone feels like they're starting to drown in pinyin, don't hesitate to comment about it. I'll see what I can do.)

(Edit: I was advised that Zhao's position 管家 guanjia was more equivalent to the role of a butler in feudal China. It certainly makes sense, since he seems to hold a rather high position amongst the servants. Might take a bit to get used to it.)

(TL Note: I really appreciate all the kind comments I have been receiving from all of you!)

Yun Qian Meng looked briefly at Shui'er who had decided to bring them in without permission, her lips forming a cold half-smile before focusing on Liu yiniang and Yun Yan tailing behind her.

Liu yiniang, who looked to be little over thirty years old, carried a distinguished bearing. Even though her pretty face was lowered, she still faintly emitted a charming aura. Notably, her exquisite and delicate body shape, despite having given birth, remained graceful from any angle. It's no wonder that, in the past, she was able to rise quickly from a yatou in the xiangfu to become a yiniang. One could not help but to love her upon seeing her!

Yun Yan, sticking closely behind Liu yiniang, also appeared very lovely. Wearing a long pink skirt matched with a silver sleeveless waistcoat, she was like a budding lotus, emitting a refreshing atmosphere from head to toe. While she was still young, she had elegant curves; presumably inheriting her good looks from Liu yiniang!

Only, Yun Yan, after all, had little contact outside the boudoir, and was also often bullied by Su Qing and her daughter. Her attractive face was filled with worry, an endlessly cautious nature was barely concealed by her clever eyes, completely lacking in the natural poise of a well-bred lady from a good family.

Shui'er who was leading the both of them in caught Yun Qian Meng's glance and felt momentary fear in her heart. After all, when a yiniang and her children visit her, the di-born young miss was completely within her rights to send them away without the need to show up personally. The fact that she decided on her own to bring them in, and that Yun Qian Meng didn't express any anger or

blame, only smiling indifferently at her, caused her heart to drum loudly. She could only put up a bold face and announce, “Xiaojie, Liu yiniang and san xiaojie are here to pay respects!”

Finished, Shui’er urgently lowered her head and moved sideways to position herself behind Yun Qian Meng, no longer opening her mouth.....

Yet Yun Qian Meng didn’t continue the conversation, and only slowly opened the book she was reading a moment ago, turning a blind eye to the two people standing right in front of her!

Seeing the situation, Liu yiniang couldn’t help but get flustered. Just now the young miss was clearly smiling at them when they walked in, yet why was she now eerily silent, focusing all of her attention on the book she was holding?

Following her thoughts, Liu yiniang appeared even more uneasy, and tried to consider if it was really too rude for them to come forward this day.

Mustering up her courage to slightly lift her head, she saw that Yun Qian Meng was gently reclining on the sofa, a book held up in her slender, lily-white hands as she read carefully. Her expression was calm and steady, but the silence could only cause others to feel anxious!

“Yun Yan follows Liu yiniang to pay respects to da xiaojie!” At this moment, Yun Yan, who had originally displayed some petty feelings, advanced slowly, pulling down her mother, who was sneakily observing Yun Qian Meng, to kneel before her.

Yun Qian Meng’s halt her reading because of her abrupt greeting. Instead, it was Mu Chun standing by her side carefully sized up Yun Tan who was kneeling with a straight back.

At first glance, Yun Yan gave others a delicate and pitiful impression; but the way she spoke earlier allowed everyone to realize that this seemingly weak and powerless girl actually had strong principles in her heart!

It would seem that within this xiangfu, no matter yiniang or xiaojie, none of them were easy to handle. For them to, despite usually staying out of sight, show up unannounced today, it must be about the matter of butler Zhao’s marriage proposal!

But who knew how the young miss was going to respond?

Thinking this way, Mu Chun unwittingly turned to look at Yun Qian Meng, only to find that whilst she was tranquilly reading just a moment ago, her lips were now forming a heavy smile. Her eyes that were still fixed on the open book were suffused with a faint coldness.....

“Mu Chun, what time is it now?” Feeling that the sun was slightly too dazzling, Yun Qian Meng handed the book over to Mu Chun, then closed both her eyes and lightly massaged her own temple with her fingers.

“Answering xiaojie, it’s close to eleven o’clock! The wind is strong out here, it’s better to return to the room!” Properly receiving the book from her, Mu Chun considerately passed her a cup of warm tea, allowing her to warm up her body.

Gracefully receiving the blue and white porcelain teacup, Yun Qian Meng lifted the small lid, blew lightly, then gracefully took a sip. Finally taking notice of the two people kneeling in front of her, she immediately looked at Mu Chun and somewhat angrily criticized, “Liu yiniang and san meimei came? You little yatou, why didn’t you rouse me when you saw me engrossed in my reading? It must have tired out yiniang and meimei that are kneeling here!”

Hearing that, Liu yiniang and Yun Yan immediately showed fawning smiles. Even though they understood this was Yun Qian Meng displaying her prestige in front of them, they didn’t dare to leak out any expression of discontent. Rather she snatched the opportunity to speak before Mu Chun could acknowledge her mistake, “Da xiaojie, what are you talking about?! Being able to look at da xiaojie at such a close distance is nubi’s good fortune, how can Mu Chun jiejie be at fault?!”

These words while extremely flattering, but just because they were spoken by Liuyiniang with her matching, ingratiating smile, unexpectedly didn’t really feel vulgar to others!

Yun Qian Meng maintaining her uncaring smile, saw how she spoke with such sincerity with eyes expressing happiness, then quickly stood up and said, “Since that is the case, yiniang and meimei should return first! It’s almost noon, the food would’ve surely been sent to everyone’s courtyards, I won’t be keeping you from having your lunches!”

Finished, she led Mu Chun and the others, planning to withdraw into her loft.....

At this point, however, a pink figure suddenly crawled towards Yun Qian Meng, and cried softly, "Please give me your support, da xiaojie! I don't want to get married to the eldest son of that butler Zhao!"

Witnessing Yun Yan's broken-hearted sobs, Yun Qian Meng's indifferent smile gradually faded. With her eyebrows slightly raised, she carelessly gave Mu Chun a meaningful glance. Mu Chun strode forward and spoke somewhat reproachfully, "San xiaojie, how could you block da xiaojie's path?"

Liu yiniang saw Yun Yan's current state and knew that there was no time to lose. She immediately crawled to Yun Qian Meng's side and spoke tearfully, "da xiaojie, I beg you to do something to help save us nubi!"

After speaking, both of them didn't wait for her response, and spontaneously kowtowed with all their strength.....

Within a few moments, both of their foreheads were completely red. So long as Yun Qian Meng didn't speak, neither of them had any intention of stopping!

Yun Qian Meng coldly looked at the begging mother and daughter. Noting particularly Yun Yan's forehead had blood gradually seeping out, she understood in her heart that the girl had an upright and unyielding character. If she was forced to marry butler Zhao's son, she would very likely martyr herself!

She was somewhat similar to the Yun Qian Meng of the past, causing her to have some heartfelt admiration towards the current Yun Yan.

Only, she was already standing on thin ice in the xiangfu, there was no way she could entangle herself in side issues just for them!

Moreover, even though the three Yun sisters seemed to be separated by seniority, in actual fact, their births were only a few months apart! It could be seen that Liuyiniang was not an especially good person. If by any chance, she brought wolves into her room, it was likely going to be too late to have any regrets by that time!

Qi Luo Yuan was filled with the sounds of crying and head-knocking. Yun Qian Meng coldly looked down upon the two people at her feet. Her eyes were like a

vast and deep ocean, others were unable to see through any of the thoughts within. Indifferently ignoring the strained atmosphere, she spoke unhurriedly over the racket, “I’m just a da xiaojie, only father is the master of the house! If yiniang and meimei have received any injustice, you should look for father; no need to waste your time with me!”

Finished, she raised her feet to leave.....

But Yun Yan and Liu yiniang understood clearly that if they missed this opportunity, they would never see Yun Qian Meng ever again!

Thus, throwing away any sense of decorum, both of them suddenly threw themselves forward, each person hugging her legs on either side, loudly crying, “Xiaojie, if Suyiniang referred Yan’er to a decent family, nubi would not have dared to have any complaints! But the eldest son of that butler Zhao is an untalented and unlearned scoundrel! How can nubi have the heart to let her own daughter be married off to him as a concubine?”

Right now Yun Yan was also crying very miserably, her cheeks full of tears, and even her voice had become slightly hoarse. Her hands simply hugged Yun Qian Meng’s left leg with abnormal persistence; even Shui’er and the others couldn’t pull her away no matter how much strength they used.

“Da jiejie, please, considering our relationship as siblings, please give me some help! Yun Yan isn’t wishing to marry a wealthy husband, as long as that person is capable of knowing me and loving me, I will be satisfied! But that butler Zhao’s son, his moral character, da jiejie should know clearly, the state inside the fu, da jiejie knows even more clearly! If we were not at the end of our ropes, then we absolutely wouldn’t have come to trouble jiejie. Pleading jiejie to show some mercy!”

Being hugged tightly by the both of them, Yun Qian Meng had no way to walk. Seeing that her kind words were unable to make them retreat in the face of defeat, her eyes flashed with impatience. Mu Chun and the others saw her expression and redoubled their efforts to pull them away.....

“Da xiaojie, nubi has some things to say, do you know how yiniang with great difficulty, Yun Qian Meng would hear her say such shocking things.....

“Wait!”

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 12

Glossary

- 后院 **houyuan** – inner courtyard, backyard, rear court; **traditionally refers to the quarters of the womenfolk in a family**
- 妹妹 **meimei** – younger sister; 三妹妹 **san meimei** – means third (younger) sister
- 姐姐 **jiejie** – elder sister; can be added to names to show respect or a close relationship; 大姐姐 **da jiejie** – the eldest sister in the family
- 小姐 **xiaojie** – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 儿 **‘er** – child; added to names as a form of affection, closeness or endearment
- 奴婢 **nubi** – slave servant girl; referring to themselves in third person is a form of debasement
- 姨娘 **yiniang** – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 夫人 **furen** – legitimate wife; would be added to the surname of the household as a form of address; usage is similar to the English “Missus”
- 相符 **xiangfu** – the minister’s estate

(Edit: I was advised that Zhao’s position 管家 **guanjia was more equivalent to the role of a butler in feudal China. It certainly makes sense, since he seems to hold a rather high position amongst the servants. Might take a bit to get used to it.)**

Yun Qian Meng called out in an imposing manner, causing the originally noisy Qi LuoYuan to quiet down immediately.....

Liu yiniang only saw Yun Qian Meng's cold eyes stabbing at her like a sharp knife, feelings of fright shook her heart. She momentarily forgot to cry and struggle, and only watched Yun Qian Meng approach her step by step with a lifeless look in her eyes.....

"Liu yiniang, you can eat with disregard, but you can't be irresponsible with your words!" Yun Qian Meng stood in front of Liu yiniang. Towering above her, she coldly looked down at Liu yiniang, the coldness in her eyes caused her to start trembling from head to toe!

Yun Yan, who was not far away, saw that Yun Qian Meng was glaring at her mother. Even though Yun Qian Meng's calm face did not betray any emotion, her severe gaze nevertheless gave Yun Yan's heart the shivers. Only now did she react, forcibly breaking free from Mu Chun's grasp and crawled, still kneeling, to Liu yiniang's side. Holding out her hand to shake her mother out of her dazed state, she lightly reminded, "Yiniang, da xiaojie is asking you to speak!"

Shoved by Yun Yan, Liu yiniang quivered from head to toe, finally reacted, then immediately hug her head and quietly spoke, "Da xiaojie, this matter is concerns the rest of Yan'er's life, nubi would never speak recklessly about this!"

Yun Qian Meng didn't immediately accept her argument and instead carefully sized up the pair before her. Both of their words and expressions, whilst cautiously prudent, didn't have a hint of avoidance. It was clear that Liu yiniang was not making baseless accusations!

On top of that, with regards to Yun Yan's future happiness, Liu yiniang was unlikely to bring these matters up just for fun!

Only, Liu yiniang certainly knew how to hide her intentions in her words. These matters were unexpectedly concealed and hidden away for so many years. If not for Yun Yan's current situation, it was quite likely that she would have carried the secret to her grave! Now that it could be of use to her, she tried use this information to negotiate; truly a calculative person!

But she had no way of knowing that Yun Qian Meng's previous incarnation was an expert at investigating crimes and cases. Even without giving her any clues,

she could still find the truth of the matter if she made a painstaking investigation; she wasn't even slightly threatened by their behaviour!

After a brief analysis, Yun Qian Meng revealed an indifferent smile. Everyone then heard her speak calmly, "Yiniang truly has a meticulous mind; exploiting ben xiaojie to help Yun Yan break off their marriage proposal, then let ben xiaojie be the antagonist, then you can be the fisherman that catches both!"

After she spoke, Liu yiniang who was still kneeling and crawling on the floor visibly shuddered, and then lowered herself even further, not daring to speak!

She had never expected that Yun Qian Meng would actually become so intelligent; capable of seeing through her selfish motives in a flash!

At this point, Liu yiniang was starting to question her earlier decisions. The current Yun Qian Meng could break through others' mental defenses with just a few words; was definitely a more difficult opponent than Su Qing. Coming here today to greet and face her, was it the right or wrong decision?

Yun Yan at this moment, hearing the ridicule in Yun Qian Meng's words, sensed that her own mother was becoming more nervous and scared, and gathered up her courage to say, "Please forgive us, da xiaojie! Yiniang didn't have ulterior motives!"

Only, it would have been better for not to say anything. Her explanation, on the contrary, served only to prove that Liu yiniang really was concealing her other intentions!

Yun Qian Meng kept her indifferent smile from start to finish, but the look in her eyes only got colder as she immediately turned to enter her loft.....

When Liu yiniang and Yun Yan saw her leave, they looked at each other in dismay, not knowing what to do.....

Mu Chun saw how her young miss was leaving, then looked at the kneeling pair. She immediately understood Yun Qian Meng's intentions and quickly followed behind her to leave the courtyard.....

Seeing that only the two of them were left in the courtyard, Yun Yan, who was planning to stand up, was pulled back down by Liu yiniang in an instant, and asked uncertainly, "Yiniang, what's going on?"

“Yan’er, today, whether da xiaojie will help us or not, will depend on our current kneeling!” Liu yiniang had survived under Su Qing’s watch for so many years, naturally understood that this was Yun Qian Meng giving them a punishment!

Even if she really did know the truth of how Yun Qian Meng’s mother”>furen had passed away that year, she shouldn’t have attempted to blackmail her with the information!

Yun Qian Meng was letting her know that no matter what kinds of thoughts she had, Yun Qian Meng was able to see through everything very clearly!

Liu yiniang was also truly impressed with Yun Qian Meng’s formidable ability, finally understanding why in just a few days, her name had become a heated topic of discussion within the fu!

“Xiaojie, leaving Liu yiniang and san xiaojie kneeling in the yard can’t be a long-term solution!” Mu Chun was somewhat concerned as she attended to Yun Qian Meng who was practising calligraphy.

For the whole afternoon, Liu yiniang and Yun Yan knelt properly outside her loft. Although Qi Luo Yuan was considered rather remote, some servants still passed by. If others saw the situation, it might leave a stain on the reputation of the eldest young miss!

But Yun Qian Meng smiled and didn’t answer, seriously finishing the last strokes of her writing. Then, receiving a handkerchief from Mu Chun to wipe her hands she asked profoundly, “Do you really think that if we don’t say anything, Su yiniang and her people wouldn’t know?”

Su Qing had managed the xiangfu for almost twenty years, everyone inside had long since become her agents. Even the slightest movements of the wind and the grass would be passed to her ears. It was quite likely that before Liu yiniang even set foot into her Qi Luo Yuan, Su Qing had already received the news!

Catching her implied meaning, Mu Chun lightly creased her brows while a concerned expression emerged on her face, “Then if xiaojie forces them to keep kneeling, what will happen if Su yiniang complains to xiangye?”

“No need to worry!” Hearing Mu Chun’s concern, Yun Qian Meng finally

sincerely smiled. She looked at the weather outside, saw that it was almost dusk and told Mu Chun, “Let them come in, go fetch some water. Go tell Shui’er in passing that tonight’s dinner will be held in the drawing room, no need to bring it to the courtyard!”

“Yes!” Seeing Yun Qian Meng relaxed, Mu Chun tidied up the stationery on the table, then turned to exit the loft.....

When Liu yiniang and Yun Yan received permission to enter, they cheered up immediately. Even though their legs had fallen asleep and turned numb, it didn’t affect their current relieved and happy feelings. They, supporting each other to enter the loft, meet Yun Qian Meng, who was sitting inside drinking tea while reading, and kneeled again.....

“Yiniang and san meimei must be tired, so let’s just skip the pleasantries! After tidying yourselves up, follow me to the drawing room for dinner!” Seeing them start to kneel again, Yun Qian Meng closed her book and drily spoke. Coincidentally, the golden rays of the setting sun shone on her lily-white face, giving her an elegant grandeur. Liu yiniang and Yun Yan who had slightly lifted their heads at her couldn’t help but gape in awe!

“Yiniang, san xiaojie, please wash up!” At this moment, Mu Chun brought in a copper basin and softly reminded them to freshen up their faces which had been stained with tears.

They both lightly apologized, then quietly cleaned up their tear-stricken faces.....

Currently, Liu yiniang’s happy feelings had turned into apprehension. Even though Yun Qian Meng was now treating them amiably, she didn’t seem to be asking about the happenings that year, causing her to be unable to figure out what to do next.

Why, without rhyme or reason, did she want to have dinner at the drawing room? That was the only place laoye had to pass through when he returned to the houyuan, unless.....

After some careful deliberation in her heart, Liu yiniang finally expressed happiness in her eyes. Her expression when looking at Yun Qian Meng was filled with even more gratitude.....

“Normally, with Yun Qian Meng’s mother”>furen’s dowry, xiaojie’s boudoir shouldn’t be so sparsely furnished!” Seemingly wanting to curry favor with Yun Qian Meng, Liuyiniang smiled and cautiously said.

But Yun Qian Meng only put down her book, stood with Mu Chun’s support and led everyone to leave.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 13

Chapter 13 – What's the happy occasion?

“Yiniang and san meimei should sit too!” Entering the drawing room, Yun Qian Meng spoke as she took a seat.

However, now that Liu yiniang was depending completely on Yun Qian Meng to handle their affairs, she didn't dare to sit at the same level with her. She only smiled and refused, “Nubi will serve da xiaojie dinner!”

Seeing how she was being flattered, Yun Qian Meng didn't say much. She took the teacup offered by Mu Chun and took a few delicate sips, her inky-black eyes were dully looking towards the houyuan.....

“Xiaojie, nubi has brought the evening meal over!” The darkness of night gradually descended. Only after Yun Qian Meng's teacup had been replenished twice, did Shui'er arrive at the drawing room with the meal-boxes!

“Nü'er greets father!” The sound of Shui'er's words had barely faded before Yun Qian Meng respectfully stood up and faced and bowed towards someone who had rapidly arrived!

Everyone reacted to her actions quickly. One after another, they similarly bowed towards Yun Xuan Zhi who was already standing inside the drawing room!

Not expecting to see her, Yun Xuan Zhi, after sweeping a glance at Liu yiniang and Yun Yan who stood deferentially behind her, couldn't help but ask, “What is Meng'er doing here?”

This di daughter had always been cowardly from childhood. Unless there was an important occasion, she wouldn't usually take a single step out of Qi Luo Yuan. But today, she came out together with Liu yiniang. He couldn't help but feel curious!

Yun Qian Meng wore a brilliant smile as she moved lovably to Yun Xuan Zhi's side. Her pretty face was slightly tilted upwards, eyes filled with reverence towards Yun Xuan Zhi, "Nü'er is feeling much better today. After thinking that it has been a long while since last dining with father, I asked the yatou to prepare the evening meal here. Don't know if father has spare time to eat together with nü'er!"

Stopping, Yun Qian Meng motioned towards Shui'er and the others who immediately served up the meal-boxes, carefully placing the two or three dishes of vegetables on the overly large dining table!

Yun Xuan Zhi wanted to decline at first, as he had promised earlier to eat together with Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue today. If he didn't go there on time, those two would definitely pout with discontent!

But Yun Qian Meng didn't wait for his reply before immediately commanding people to set the table properly. However, the particularly large, round dining table only held a few pitiful dishes, causing Yun Xuan Zhi feel like he was losing face in front of all the servants. He immediately frowned and shot a severe gaze at butler Zhao who was by his side, "What's going on? This is the dinner you've prepared for our da xiaojie?"

Butler Zhao heard Yun Xuan Zhi's voice and knew instantly that he was angry. His heart tightened as he hurriedly lowered his head to explain, "Xiangye, I'm afraid that the kitchen must have made a mistake! Nucai will reprimand the people in charge of the kitchen later; don't know what's going on in their brains for them to make a mistake with da xiaojie's food!"

Finishing, he gave a quick glance at the page boy standing beside him, intending for him to quickly report the matter to the kitchen!

But Yun Qian Meng who was paying constant attention to his every action, even more quickly, gave Bing'er a meaningful glance. Bing'er noiselessly moved in front of the page boy, blocking his path.....

Yun Qian Meng herself strolled in front butler Zhao and smilingly said, "So you're saying that there has been a mistake with the meals given to ben xiaojie for all these days? It looks like the kitchen staff and butler Zhao are all doddering with old age. If you can't even handle such small matters properly, it would be

better to go home and enjoy your lives in retirement!”

After speaking, a faint snort was heard from Yun Qian Meng’s mouth. Butler Zhao’s heart was unable to stop trembling. He didn’t know since when could the eldest young miss give others such heavy pressure. A mere snort from her was enough to scare him witless!

“Butler Zhao, you really have too much guts, daring to mess with da xiaojie’s food!” Since Yun Qian Meng had pointed out everything, Yun Xuan Zhi momentarily turned his shame into anger and pointed directly at butler Zhao who had not dared to lift his head from the beginning. The servants by his side had long since begun kneeling on the floor. Nobody dared to even breathe, afraid to implicate themselves in the matter!

The drawing room was suddenly completely silent. Liu yiniang and Yun Yan exchanged a glance, then looked towards Yun Qian Meng again; their eyes now filled with even more reverence.

Who would have thought that the Yun family’s eldest young miss barely needed to move to frighten the usually tyrannical butler Zhao into such a state!

They originally thought that Yun Qian Meng only invited them to the drawing room for dinner to handle Yun Yan’s marriage matters, but didn’t expect that she had been prepared long beforehand. It was very likely that the issues coming up would leave butler Zhao in an even more helpless state!

“Xiangye, nucai definitely doesn’t dare to dock food from xiaojie! Nukai believes that it must be the kitchen managers whom couldn’t control their greed! Xiangye, nucai is completely unrelated to this matter, please see clearly!” Butler Zhao knew at the moment that this matter concerned the reputation of the xiangfu. If outsiders with bad intentions caught wind of this farce, then he was afraid that even if Yun Xuan Zhi didn’t have the heart to deal with him, to stifle the long-lasting rumors, he didn’t have any route from which to escape!

It would be better for him to push the blame onto someone else so that he would at most be guilty of poor oversight. As long as Su yiniang helped him say a few good words, he could still keep his position as butler within the xiangfu.

But Yun Qian Meng didn’t give others any opportunity to speak. Just as butler Zhao’s words hit the floor, everyone heard her calm tone, “According to the

hearsay over the past few days, a happy occasion will be happening in the fu. Butler Zhao must have been too busy with those things that he neglected to supervise the kitchen properly, right?”

At her words, Liu yiniang and Yun Yan visibly paled; butler Zhao's body also trembled. Even Yun Xuan Zhi, in his anger, momentarily blanked out. He unwittingly looked towards the mildly smiling Yun Qian Meng, “Meng'er, what's the happy occasion in our xiangfu?”

But Yun Qian Meng only gave him a veiled smile and calmly said, “Nü'er only heard the rumors, father had best ask butler Zhao personally!”

After that, she didn't say more. Turning to stand beside Yun Xuan Zhi, she coldly smiled at butler Zhao, intent on watching his response!

Butler Zhao had absolutely no idea that she would bring this matter up. Especially now that Yun Xuan Zhi was in the midst of venting his raging temper, it was quite likely that his plan wouldn't proceed smoothly!

However, Yun Xuan Zhi expression was now fierce and severe, causing butler Zhao to feel the cold sweat on his back. He had no choice but to harden his head and say, “Answering xiangye, Su yiniang promised nucai to betroth san xiaojie to nucai's eldest son!”

Plop..... At this moment, Liu yiniang and Yun Yan both tearfully rushed to kneel before Yun Xuan Zhi.....

“Begging laoye for a favor! Su yiniang did plan to have Yan'er betrothed to butler Zhao's eldest son as a concubine! Yan'er might be shu-born, but is still a xiaojie of the xiangfu in the end, how can she be a concubine to a butler's son? How would laoye keep face if this happened?” Liu yiniang immediately brought up the importance of Yun Xuan Zhi's reputation. Also hearing Yun Yan's heart-broken sobs, Yun Xuan Zhi, who was already full of anger, finally blew his fuse.....

“You really have too much guts! You dare to even think about getting our xiangfu's xiaojie!” Recalling butler Zhao's ignorant and incompetent son, and seeing Yun Yan distinctly pitiful appearance, Yun Xuan Zhi only felt uncontrollable rage and strode forward to step on butler Zhao's shoulders!

“Laoye, why are you like this?” Just at this moment, Su Qing who should have

been staying in her room brought Yun Ruo Xue to appear before everyone.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 14

Chapter 14 – Obstructing a marriage

Seeing that Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue had arrived hurriedly, a streak of cold laughter streaked across Yun Qian Meng's calm eyes. Only, she didn't make any moves and continued to stand quietly at Yun Xuan Zhi's side, seemingly not caring about their sudden arrival.

Yet Liu yiniang and Yun Yan slowly ceased their weeping as they approached. In particular, when Yun Ruo Xue glared hatefully at them, they were so frightened that they immediately lowered their heads. Originally planning to plead for mercy, their words were forcibly choked back into their stomachs!

Out of everyone on the scene, butler Zhao was most secretly delighted. Seeing that his own zhuzi had arrived, his body straightened up from his previous kneeling crawl. His eyes that were looking at Liu yiniang and Yun Yan became even more conceited and provocative!

Su Qing, under everyone's fearful gaze, held a mild expression as she walked towards Yun Xuan Zhi. Looking cute and helpless, she leaned against Yun Xuan Zhi and tenderly spoke, "Laoye, what happened? I see that you've given butler Zhao quite a fright!"

As she spoke, Su Qing's eyes inadvertently shot towards butler Zhao, giving him a veiled look.

He caught Su Qing's hint and had just opened his mouth to speak when he heard Yun Qian Meng say, "Father, the weather is chilly and the floor is cold. Yun Yan is still axiaojie of the xiangfu, and didn't do anything wrong. Better let her get up, please?"

Finishing, Yun Qian Meng pretended not to notice Su Qing's resentful gaze and stood in place. Her eyes expressing sisterly love, her face faintly showed a compassionate appearance!

Yun Xuan Zhi was originally in a fit of anger, but when he saw Su Qing appear, his anger had somewhat dissipated. At this moment, hearing Yun Qian Meng's reminder, he nodded his head to see Liu yiniang and Yun Yan softly crying while kneeling on the floor, while Yun Qian Meng was actually concerned for her shu sister without taking heed their difference in status. He, himself, as the father, never noticed that his youngest daughter was already a slender and elegant young lady; couldn't help but feel some pain in his heart and softly said, "Liu yiniang and Yan'er should get up now."

Liu yiniang and Yun Yan stood up compliantly under the glowering gaze from Su Qing and then deferentially moved to stand behind Yun Qian Meng, provoking another fierce glare from Su Qing.

Only, before she had retracted her gaze from them, she heard Yun Xuan Zhi calmly ask, "Qing'er, I heard you betrothed Yan'er to butler Zhao's son as a concubine?"

Su Qing had just received the news and hurried over because she was worried that the story would be distorted by Yun Qian Meng. Now that Yun Xuan Zhi had asked, her face wore a meek smile as recited the explanation she had prepared beforehand, "That's right, laoye! I saw that Yan'er is already of marriageable age. Moreover, butler Zhao's son was also someone I watched grow up, a child with decent looks and bearing, so I made the decision to draw up their marriage myself!"

Finishing, Su Qing coldly glanced at the pair behind Yun Qian Meng with the corner of her eyes as her smile grew even wider!

Catching her glance, Yun Yan's face darkened. Her teeth biting on her lower lip, both of her hands that were pinching a handkerchief under her sleeves had firmly formed into fists.....

Seeing that Yun Yan didn't dare to speak out even though she was angry, Su Qing smiled coldly and continued speaking, "Moreover, even if Yun Yan is a xiaojie of the xiangfu, Liu yiniang's status is too low. Yun Yan also doesn't stand out from the other upper-class young ladies in the capital, so I'm afraid that the younger generation of those noble clans won't have interest to propose! So why not marry her to butler Zhao's son? In the future, as family, butler Zhao will pour

in even more effort when working for laoye!”

Her words sounded fair and reasonable while also presenting Su Qing as virtuous and generous, completely giving others the impression that she was the Missus in charge!

However, Su Qing’s reasoning was not gapless.....

Yun Qian Meng coldly looked at Yun Xuan Zhi who was now, just after a raging temper, calm and tranquil. Her lips curled into a bland smile and, fixing her eyes that looked as deep as a pond directly at Su Qing’s excessively virtuous expression, she slowly said, “Su yiniang’s words are confusing! Talking about age, Ruo Xue meimei has yet to be engaged, so when did it become san meimei’s turn? Besides, Su yiniang’s status in the xiangfu can’t be considered particularly noble either. So, based on your reasoning, Ruo Xue meimei who is also a shu daughter should also be married to butler Zhao’s son! Father, Meng’er is untalented, can’t understand Su yiniang’s meaning!”

Yun Qian Meng words were like a slap in the face to Su Qing, both her and Yun Ruo Xue’s expressions turned ugly!

Yet, Yun Ruo Xue’s eyes hid an ominous glint. Wearing a cold smile, she retorted with an enigmatic air, “What are you saying, jiejie? Don’t forget, jiejie is now a person rejected by your fiancée! In this life, fancying the families of lords and officials can only be your own wishful thinking! Wouldn’t it be better if jiejie took Yun Yan’s place to marry butler Zhao’s son?!”

Finishing, as if taking joy in the other’s misfortune, the mother and daughter jeered at Yun Qian Meng. Mu Chun and others looked at the family’s young miss with concern, feeling detested by the malicious pair. Going so far as to joke about the most important thing in a girl’s life, if this was spread outside, it would damage the young miss’s reputation!

But Yun Qian Meng was too calm, causing Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue’s hearts, who were inwardly mocking her, to beat like a drum. As neither of them made any moves, Yun Qian Meng lightly opened her red lips, dully saying, “Don’t tell me, Su yiniang and er mei didn’t know that even father himself can’t make a decision regarding my marriage affairs! Furthermore, what is my identity, and what is er mei’s identity? If the way you disrespect your di sister was known to

outsiders, then no one in the capital would venture to seek er mei's hand in marriage!"

With her justification, even Yun Xuan Zhi who had planned to side with Yun Ruo Xue, could only inwardly glare at his blabbermouthed second daughter. He was just going to help her explain, but was unprepared for Yun Qian Meng's speed.....

"Besides, what is father's identity? Even a shu daughter has more more than enough status to become the legitimate wife of any number of lower-ranked officials! Father cannot, just to curry favor in the inner chamber, sacrifice the future happiness of san meimei! Look carefully at the so-called influential families in West Chu Guo, how many of them are connected by marriage? Father can't not understand this principle, right?!" Yun Qian Meng's speech seemed obscure, but was in fact very alarming, momentarily awakened Yun Xuan Zhi!

Yun Xuan Zhi leaned over and sized up Yun Yan once more. He only found that his little daughter, although falling short of the dignified air of his oldest, had still become a rare elegant beauty. Besides, he only had these three daughters. If he didn't make use of them well, then he might not be able to garner the support he needed in the future as easily!

Thinking this way, Yun Xuan Zhi's expression gradually turned heavy. His fierce eyes shot a penetrating glare at butler Zhao when he decided, "Butler Zhao, you shouldn't daydream about this kind of thing! Properly take care of the yiniang and xiaojie, just manage your own tasks properly!"

Butler Zhao heard Yun Xuan Zhi utter this and knew in his heart that Yun Qian Meng's meddling had turned this matter into a lost cause. He could only swallow his hatred towards her and quietly answered, "Yes!"

Yun Yan and Liu yiniang couldn't believe their ears. They didn't think that Yun Qian Meng could repel Su Qing's attacks with only a few words, and easily changed Yun Xuan Zhi's way of thinking. Their eyes that were looking towards her momentarily filled with gratefulness.....

Yet Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue's expressions were very ugly. Su Qing had been in charge for so long, her words were already similar to an imperial edict within thexiangfu. She could not accept being overruled by Yun Qian Meng today; but

because of Yun Xuan Zhi's judgement and verdict, she could only give up. Forcibly smiling to bow to Yun Xuan Zhi, she expressionlessly brought Yun Ruo Xue to return to the inner courtyard.....

“Su yiniang, please wait!” Only, Yun Qian Meng pursued and didn't let her leave, suddenly speaking to stop her exit.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 15

Glossary

- 妹妹 meimei – little sister, younger sister; can be added to names to show affection
- 姐姐 jiejie – elder sister, big sister; can be added to names to show respect or a close relationship
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 主子 zhuzi – the masters of the household;
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 奴才 nucai – slave servant
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate
- 老爷 laoye, 相爷 xiangye – old master, master; the head of the house

Su Qing didn't expect that Yun Qian Meng would suddenly speak, her steps became somewhat disorderly. Calming down and fixing her expression, she turned with face full of smiles and warmly said, "Don't know if da xiaojie needs anything?"

Su Qing had now experienced Yun Qian Meng's ability to quibble about the smallest matters. As a result, she paid increased attention to follow proper etiquette, not allowing Yun Qian Meng to find the slightest fault.

Yun Qian Meng saw that she was forcibly reeling in her anger, even pretending to smile. Without batting an eyelid, she asked with a mild smile, "Su yiniang and Ruo Xuemeimei should still be under curfew. Why were you able to come and go

as you please?”

Finishing, Yun Qian Meng quietly stood at her original spot and turned her doubtful eyes at Yun Xuan Zhi, appearing very confused!

Hearing Yun Qian Meng purposely call attention to this matter, Yun Ruo Xue's face flushed red and, ignoring Su Qing's efforts to restrain her, fiercely glared at Yun Qian Meng. Unable to suppress her voice, she howled, “Yun Qian Meng! You.....”

“Ruo Xue, watch your manners!” Glancing at Yun Qian Meng's lips which had gradually curled into a sarcastic smile, Yun Xuan Zhi momentarily furrowed his eyebrows then immediately scolded Yun Ruo Xue sternly, frightening all the servants in the drawing room into lowering their heads one after another!

Su Qing felt that things were not looking good and noticed that Yun Qian Meng hid a slight disdain in her eyes. She secretly stuck out her right foot and ruthlessly kicked at the advancing Yun Ruo Xue's calves.....

“Ruo Xue, how can you speak like that? Da xiaojie only said the facts, why did you get angry? Hurry up and apologize, don't cause problems for your daddy!” Finishing, Su Qing smiled at Yun Xuan Zhi then said gently, “Laoye, Ruo Xue is still immature. Moreover the sisters are accustomed to being intimate with each other so she accidentally acted impolitely. You also don't need to lower yourself to argue with a child!”

Her words were pretty; simultaneously pointing out that Yun Qian Meng was purposely making things difficult for Yun Xuan Zhi, while mentioning that Yun Ruo Xue's actions were completely unintentional!

Yun Ruo Xue who was suddenly kicked by her own mother, immediately felt the pain on her calf and regained her rationality. Seeing Yun Xuan Zhi glare at her furiously, her heart tightened as she drooped her eyebrows and answered in an acquiescent manner, “Nü'er forgot her manners, daddy and dajie please don't take it to heart!”

Yun Qian Meng coldly watched the mother and daughter perform their play, her sharp eyes were able to notice that although Yun Ruo Xue's mouth was apologetic, the hands hidden under her sleeves were gripping tightly on a silk handkerchief. Her heart immediately filled with understanding as the corners of

her smile raised even higher!

When Yun Xuan Zhi saw his favorite daughter apologize, his tone also softened. Seeing Yun Qian Meng calmly standing within the drawing room, he spoke with pretention, “Don’t forget your manners in the future! The lax behavior in the houyuan shouldn’t be brought out in important occasions!”

At his words, Yun Ruo Xue’s heavily repressed anger flared up. Her face full of unwillingness, she could only glare at Yun Qian Meng who had maintained her calm from start to finish.

Yun Qian Meng received her angry gaze, then followed along his lines to say, “Father is right! However, Su yiniang and Ruo Xue as part of the xiangfu’s zhuzi, failed to present a good example to others. If everyone else started to treat father’s words as decoration, then wouldn’t the xiangfu be a mess?”

Did Yun Qian Meng really not catch the meaning between his lines?

On the surface, he was reproaching Yun Ruo Xue, but in actual fact, he was siding with his very same second daughter! He had even indirectly acknowledged Su Qing’s explanation!

But Yun Xuan Zhi didn’t expect his eldest daughter to keep biting without letting go. In particular, there were currently many servants in the drawing room. If all of them started to imitate their example, then the xiangfu would be hard to manage in the future. Even his own prestige would also be affected!

Thinking so, Yun Xuan Zhi heart felt some feelings of blame towards Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue. They obviously knew that Yun Qian Meng was now different from the past, yet they still went to cause trouble for themselves. Under the presence of so many watchful eyes, even if he had it in his heart to help them, it was still impossible!”

After lowering head and shortly muttering to himself, Yun Xuan Zhi under Yun Qian Meng’s mild smiling look, heavily announced, “Su yiniang will be confined to her quarters for half a month, Yun Ruo Xue will be similarly punished for twenty days!”

Hearing this, Su Qing and Yun Ruo Xue lifted their heads at the same time. Only, Yun Xuan Zhi didn’t have a good expression right now, his eyes full of

reproach. Su Qing immediately understood that Yun Qian Meng was straining the feelings between her and Yun Xuan Zhi!

But Yun Ruo Xue at her side had already forgotten her earlier lesson and just wanted to step forward and argue with Yun Qian Meng, but was deftly pulled back by the sharp-sighted Su Qing. The hall momentarily resounded with Su Qing's deferential voice, "Laoye is right, nubi's teachings are unsatisfactory and will pay more attention in the future!"

Finishing, she wanted to pull away the unresigned Yun Ruo Xue and leave, only to see that Yun Qian Meng had something to say. She appeared somewhat conflicted as she walked to Su Qing's side and seeming very unwilling, said, "Father, just a few days of Su yiniang's confinement and the xiangfu has already become this wild. Wouldn't it be better for father to select someone else to temporarily fill in for Su yiniang at managing the household affairs?"

Hearing Yun Qian Meng had finally revealed her purpose, Su Qing's leaving figure paused. She immediately turned around and expressed her disagreement, "What is da xiaojie saying?! Managing the affairs of the xiangfu is nubi's duty! Besides, you can't find anyone else that is qualified for the task within the fu! We can't place the burden on da xiaojie, after all, da xiaojie still needs to get married!"

Her words hid the meaning that Yun Qian Meng would one day, be of her husband's family. Letting someone outside the household manage the domestic affairs of their maternal home was actually really inappropriate!

And Yun Xuan Zhi clearly understood her implied meaning and looked at Yun Qian Meng with an added layer of fierceness and suspicion!

However, Yun Qian Meng just smiled as her delicate hands gestured towards Liuyiniang by her side. She said unhurriedly, "Father must have forgotten that we still have Liu yiniang! Liu yiniang is part of the xiangfu, and also part of the zhuzi. Her status and position is equal to Su yiniang, trust that she is qualified and capable! Nü'er has grown tired of eating the dishes on the table. Father can't possibly have the heart to, just because no one is in charge in the fu, let nü'er suffer injustice?"

While she was speaking, her fingers had changed direction. Everyone's gaze

was drawn towards the dining table, only to find that the large table only held a few meager dishes. It was likely that the lowest servants in the xiangfu dined with even more luxury than this!

Seeing that Yun Qian Meng was backing them into a corner, Su Qing's eyes became fierce. She instantaneously shot butler Zhao a meaningful glance.....

Butler Zhao had been suppressing his stomach full of anger towards Yun Qian Meng. Noticing Su Qing's prompt, he immediately spoke in terror, "Laoye, it must be because the kitchen staff is too busy that they lost their heads, messing up on the meal! In all likelihood, da xiaojie's food must still be in the kitchen, nucai will later bring people to tie up the kitchen staff that goofed off and have them apologize to the xiaojie!"

Yun Qian Meng observed both of their interactions and then coldly said, "Butler Zhao, you can be considered a guilty party, do you think your words would be able to convince father? Let me ask you, when is the monthly allowance in the fu given out?"

Su Qing and butler Zhao had already compared their notes regarding this matter. Hearing this question, he visibly relaxed and immediately recited his prepared response, "Answering da xiaojie, the third day every month! Only, money is in short supply within the fu this month, so it has been delayed for a few days!"

Listening to his explanation, Yun Qian Meng sternly said, "Butler Zhao, quickly kneel down! If a situation has occurred concerning the financial affairs of the fu, why haven't you quickly informed father about it? Tell me, what use is a person who deceitfully conceals information from others in the fu? Speak! Is it because you coveted the spending money of the fu?"

Having such a large accusation dropped on his head, butler Zhao trembled from head to toe and knelt down on the floor with a resounding plop, and kowtowed non-stop towards Yun Xuan Zhi, "Laoye, please investigate clearly, nucai absolutely doesn't dare to use the money that belongs to the fu!"

As for Su Qing, was also momentarily shocked into a blank stare by Yun Qian Meng's shrewd response and her ability to entrap others with their words. She only remained at her spot with a deathly white expression.....

Yun Xuan Zhi's face was now completely ashen. Seeing the look on their faces, his heart had already started to believe Yun Qian Meng's words. Filled with disappointment, he decided, "Qing'er, you should just properly rest in your quarters for the next few days, the other things will be handled by Liu yiniang then!"

Hearing this, Su Qing staggered and almost fell onto the floor in a sitting position.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 16

Chapter 16 – Relatives from Fu Guo Gong Fu

Perhaps Yun Xuan Zhi's rage was really too effective; for the next few days, every courtyard seemed to live together in harmony. With less people causing problems for one another, the xiangfu quieted down a lot.....

However, these few days, Yun Qian Meng, from hearing Mu Chun's incessant grumbling, felt that her ears were growing calluses.....

"Mu Chun, if there's something you don't understand, just speak up about it!" Noticing that she had been moody for a few days, Yun Qian Meng lightly patted some loose soil with her bare hands and casually started to talk.

Mu Chun quickly held out her hands and used a teacup to water the just planted seeds. But her small mouth still didn't take a break from jabbering on and on, as she, somewhat puzzled, asked, "Xiaojie, you are born di. After furen passed away, letting you take charge of the affairs of the xiangfu is both reasonable and fair, so why did you yield to Liu yiniang?"

Mu Chun wasted her breath for half a day, only to lift her head and see Yun Qian Meng pay undivided attention to the seedling in her hands, a faint smile never leaving her lips. For a moment, Mu Chun felt somewhat deflated; her big and round eyes looked around. Seeing no outsiders, she lowered her voice to say, "Nubi heard, Haiwangfu's Tian junzhu had taken over half the wangfu!"

"You ah!" Yet what she received was a light few light knocks to her skull from Yun Qian Meng.

"Xiaojie!" Teased by Yun Qian Meng, Mu Chun pouted and her cheeks began to blush. With one hand covering her forehead, she said reproachfully, "Nubi is still just thinking for xiaojie's sake! That Liu yiniang isn't exactly a good person, now that she is in charge, will she even put xiaojie in her eyes in the future?"

Yun Qian Meng saw her little yatou get angry and that her eyes filled with concern, and couldn't help feeling warm in her heart. She slapped her hands together a few times then received a clean handkerchief from Mu Chun to wipe off the dirt on her hands. Only then did she speak with deep meaning, "Do you think that Su Qing managing the estate for all these years counts for nothing? Liu yiniang">Liu Han Yu might be a yiniang like her, but she doesn't have father's affection, doesn't have a favored child by her side, nor does she have a strong maternal family. Do you really think that she could be on par with Su Qing? In the xiangfu, the people working under Su Qing, which one of them is not a clever person? Will they really let Liu yiniang">Liu Han Yu easily take over as zhuzi and let her order them around? Silly yatou, this really isn't a easy chore; if anything goes wrong, we can't tell how nitpicky Su Qing will be!"

Mu Chun felt like she suddenly saw the light, her pupils looked at Yun Qian Meng full adoration. But she still had something she didn't understand, "Xiaojie, if this is such a thorny problem, why did you save san xiaojie then? If Su yiniang comes into power again, then I'm afraid that san xiaojie will be even more miserable!"

"Miserable?" Yun Qian Meng coldly snorted, as the scene of Liu yiniang's barely repressed excitement replayed in her head, and calmly said, "After so much trouble to regain father's attention, Liu yiniang will certainly seize the opportunity to find Yun Yan a good marriage!"

As she spoke, Shui'er was seen quickly walking over. She saw Yun Qian Meng, immediately bowed, then finally said, "Xiaojie, the da furen of Fu Guo Gong Fu came to see you!"

Finishing, Bing'er was seen leading Qu furen Ji Shu Yu and Liu yiniang over.....

"Wai shengnü greets da jiumu!" Yun Qian Meng immediately handed the handkerchief over to Mu Chun, personally went forward, and bowed towards the graceful and poised Ji Shu Yu.....

A pair of well maintained hands gently stretched to Yun Qian Meng's sides and lightly lifted her with a hug. Jin Shu Yu's eyes were filled with concern as she sized up Yun Qian Meng whom she hadn't seen in a long time. Her heart couldn't help but pain as she said, "Meng'er since to have lost weight recently! Let jiumu

take a look at your head wound. You must take of it properly, can't let it leave a scar!"

Yun Qian Meng only felt a warm, fine and smooth hand caressing her cheeks while her injured forehead was gently cared for. She couldn't help feeling curious, wanting to find out what Ji Shu Yu was really like!

Lifting up her head, she saw that Ji shi's refined facial features, especially her gentle and limpid eyes, allowed others to subconsciously feel willing to be close to her!

Her body was clad in an expensive long dress, while a pearl-embroidered waistcoat was draped over her shoulders. Her hair sported a ruyi hairpin and two Eight Treasures hairpins, while the jade-emerald earrings on her ears emitted a faint radiance under the sunlight. Although she was dressed reservedly, she still displayed the intangible airs of a person from an influential family.

Yun Qian Meng quickly understood that Qu furen was an aristocratic lady through and through.

"Many thanks for jiumu's concern! Meng'er was unfilial to have caused jiumu to come here personally. Some other day, I will necessarily head to Fu Guo Gong Fu to beg forgiveness!" Yun Qian Meng bowed again on the spot, but was held up by Ji shi!

Ji shi said in playful anger, "Don't mention it, your health was poor, how could you move about? Old madam is also very worried about the condition of your injury, and sent me over to take a look. If it can't heal in time for old madam's birthday, then you should just stay here and recuperate at ease!"

Yun Qian Meng respectfully invited Ji shi into her chambers, personally offered some hot tea, then lightly said while smiling, "Jiumu please report to wai zumu that on her birthday, Meng'er will definitely visit to give congratulations! This head wound is already healing quickly, please don't worry about it!"

Ji Shu Yu swept a glance at Yun Qian Meng's room, only to find that the eldest young miss of the xiangfu only had an old bed and a dressing table in her pitiful room, and that the four walls were stained with rain marks. Ji Shu Yu's heart was suddenly unhappy, but only because Liu yiniang was present, she endured it and didn't speak out!

However, seeing today that Yun Qian Meng was behaving in natural and unrestrained manner, every one of her actions calm and unhurried, Ji Shu Yu's expression couldn't help but change as she started to seriously examine the young lady before her!

She could only see that Yun Qian Meng was wearing a light green muslin skirt that, covered by an external layer of gold chiffon, was embroidered with silver clouds. Her black hair was teased up in a simple fashion with a white marble hairpin pinning some in place, while the rest was left to hang down her neck, contrasting with her snow white skin; her disposition extraordinary!

And at this time, Yun Qian Meng had a mild smile across her face, her eyes were as if a deep well, of which others can't even glimpse at the bottom. Especially the way she had responded appropriately just now, if compared to her past cowardly, timid, shy and reserved behaviour, was like a completely different person; leaving Ji Shu Yu in a momentary blank stare!

No wonder when she visited the palace recently, the Empress Dowager had mentioned to her that Yun Qian Meng was completely different from the past, it seems that it was really true!

If the old madam met this kind of granddaughter, she would probably be very delighted!

Thinking about that, Ji Shu Yu revealed a pleased expression as her lips couldn't help curling up. She pulled Yun Qian Meng's small hands and lightly patted them a few times, "In that case, I'll arrange a carriage to pick you up then! Only....."

Ji Shu Yu's gaze swept towards Yun Qian Meng's clothes. Although the material was not bad, it could be seen that these clothes were getting old, showing her it was likely that xiangfu people didn't properly serve her with their hearts!

Ji Shu Yu lightly creased her eyebrows and coldly glanced at Liu yiniang at the side. Somewhat displeased, she said, "If the xiangfu can't afford it, then da xiaojie's future expenses will be borne by Fu Guo Gong Fu!"

Hearing this, Liu yiniang's heart sounded a large thud and she immediately said fearfully, "Furen don't anger, nubi will take good care of xiaojie, won't let furen

worry!”

Yun Qian Meng was very touched at the moment. Somewhat coquettishly, she burrowed into Ji Shu Yu’s bosom, and spoke with a slight sob, “Many thanks for jiumu’s concern! Only, Liu yiniang just recently took over the affairs of the fu, please don’t blame her wrongly!”

Hearing Yun Qian Meng’s explanation, she relaxed her expression a little bit, but her tone remained heavy. Still, feeling that the young one in her bosom was now so sensible, her heart unwittingly filled with motherly love as she tenderly stroked Yun Qian Meng’s fine black hair and lightly said, “If Meng’er needs anything, just send someone to jiumu to ask! You little girl, before this you were unwilling to to visit our Fu Guo Gong Fu, every year the old madam’s birthday was attended by your er mei. None of us knew anything about your life or your surroundings! Now that I’ve seen it, how can I not feel sad?”

Finished, Ji Shu Yu pulled out a handkerchief and quietly wiped her tears.....

Yun Qian Meng, who was still sitting in her bosom, comforted her with smiling eyes, “Jiumu has nothing to worry about, Meng’er won’t be bullied by others anymore!”

Ji Shu Yu saw her resolute expression and felt somewhat relieved. Both of them chatted idly for a while, before Yun Qian Meng got up to send off Ji shi.....

“So, what matters have brought yiniang here today?” Returning to Qi Luo Yuan once again, Yun Qian Meng looked at Liu yiniang who was following close behind and asked faintly.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 17

Chapter 17 – Seeking advice from the young miss

Liu Han Yu kept looking at the three yatou behind Yun Qian Meng, seemingly hesitant to speak.....

“Don’t worry, just speak your mind!” Watching her act so cautiously, Yun Qian Meng could only find it funny. Perhaps, if Shui’er hadn’t arbitrarily decided to bring them into Qi Luo Yuan back then, Liu Han Yu would likely still be having headaches over Yun Yan’s unwanted marriage; currently, her appearance was similar to a person avoiding thieves and robbers!

Liu yiniang had originally wanted to let Yun Qian Meng dismiss her servants, but, seeing that she trusted her yatou so much, she swallowed her words back into her stomach and wore a flattering smile. Sitting down beside Yun Qian Meng, she softly said, “Da xiaojie, the situation over at Feng He Yuan seemed tumultuous for the past few days! Reportedly, the slightest mistakes by the servants at Su yiniang’s side were met with heavy punishment!”

In the face of Liu Han Yu’s fawning, Yun Qian Meng didn’t refuse to give her face. She held up a jasper tea cup, lifted the cover with a hand and, lips smiling, listened to her talk about Su Qing’s circumstances!

“So what you’re saying, is that Su yiniang is unsatisfied with father’s punishment?” Gracefully taking a few sips, Yun Qian Meng gazed at the dark green tea as she lightly said, “Only, if yiniang has the free time to worry about others, you should spend your attention on father instead! This time only then father punished Su yiniang because she did something wrong! But she is still father’s favorite; if Liu yiniang doesn’t strengthen your position, then this hard-fought position will become hers again in the blink of an eye!”

Liu yiniang had wanted to continue talking about Su Qing, but Yun Qian Meng’s reminder, was like an alarm knocking her awake!

Truly, Su Qing, although her maternal family was not even nearly as influential as the legitimate wife, Qu Ruo Li's, had been showered with the most affection by Yun Xuan Zhi for the past decade. It could be seen that Su Qing really had a firm grip on Yun Xuan Zhi's heart!

Yet she, herself, had been so engrossed in happiness after gaining a little ground, that she had pushed these important facts to the back of her mind. If, in half a month, Su Qing regains her authority, she could only worry if she and Yun Yan had any good days left to live!

Thinking so, Liu Han Yu could only feel that her back was drenched in cold sweat, so much so that her handkerchief had become damp from perspiration from her hands!

Humbly glancing up, she saw Yun Qian Meng calmly and peacefully sip her tea. Liu Han Yu finally truly admired this young lady. Although she spent her days idling in Qi Luo Yuan, she was actually well aware of the happenings outside as if everything was on the back of her hand!

Slightly turning her gaze, Liu Han Yu lowered her voice, then finally brought up the reason for her visit, "Da xiaojie, these days, nubi went to the accounting office to withdraw the daily household funds, but the accountant there keeps being difficult! Does Da xiaojie have any advice?"

Finishing, Liu Han Yu didn't say more and only tightly gazed at Yun Qian Meng, her eyes clearly full of expectation!

Yet Yun Qian Meng only smiled, put the teacup on the table, then slowly and deliberately spoke, "The person in charge now is you, Liu yiniang, not me! Besides, if there is anything that you can't handle in the fu, Liu yiniang can report to father. I trust that father will surely help yiniang take charge of the situation!"

Everyone could see that this situation was a result of Su Qing intentionally making things difficult!

Most likely, the jade medallion that grants the right to withdraw the funds was firmly in Su Qing's possession. Without the jade medallion, even if Liu yiniang was in charge, the accountant won't accept her authority!

Su Qing did this, undoubtedly wanting Liu Han Yu to make a fool of herself, as

she paved the path for her eventual return to power!

Yun Qian Meng's answer, on one hand, reminded Liu Han Yu that Yun Xuan Zhi was the master of the estate; anything that happened ought to be reported to him. She trusted that with Liu yiniang's competence and ability, Yun Xuan Zhi definitely won't be able to be too biased in favor of Su Qing!

On the other hand, she was also telling Liu Han Yu not to let go of any opportunities to get closer to Yun Xuan Zhi!

Liu Han Yu was also a smart person. Knowing that Yun Qian Meng had already given her such a clear hint, her heart was filled with gratitude, and her face lit up with joy. Agreeing repeatedly, she then rose to leave.....

Only, after taking a few steps, she recalled Ji shi's earlier words, and lifted her head to sweep her eyes over Yun Qian Meng's chambers. Inwardly frowning, she turned around to gently say, "Da xiaojie, why don't you temporarily move out of Qi Luo Yuan? After nubi gets people to renovate the place, you can return."

Sensing Liu Han Yu's kind intentions, Yun Qian Meng however shook her head with a shallow smile, "There's no need, living here is quite good. If Yan'er has nothing to do everyday, she should come visit Qi Luo Yuan more often!"

Yun Qian Meng didn't want to owe others a favor some small issue. Besides, even though the loft was now somewhat shabby, it was still where Qu furen stayed in while she was alive. It was a constant reminder to herself of all the injustice that had been given to Qu furen and the former Yun Qian Meng, as she planned to regain everything that was taken from them in their place!

Liu Han Yu saw that Yun Qian Meng was resolute and didn't try to force her. Only, noticing that Qi Luo Yuan had only three childlike yatou, her eyes slightly turned as she said in a low voice, "Since xiaojie insists, nubi will respect your wishes! However, xiaojie doesn't even have a mama to take charge by your side. nubi will have someone send over the register over later, xiaojie should take a look and choose a few capable servants to serve under you!" Finishing, she brought her servants to leave.

During her return trip, Yun Qian Meng's earlier invitation was still lingering on her mind. Mulling over her thoughts, she finally understood the hidden meaning!

Right now, in Yun Xuan Zhi's eyes, it was really inappropriate for Yun Qian Meng to interfere with the xiangfu!

That's why, it was better for her to maintain some distance from Qi Luo Yuan. But, if Yun Yan and Yun Qian Meng were close, then the sisters meeting often would be something that Yun Xuan Zhi liked to see. Besides, if she encountered any difficult problems, she could consult with Yun Qian Meng through Yun Yan, even having the effect of pulling wool over people's eyes!

It couldn't be left unsaid that, the young miss, ever since her betrothal was rejected by Chen Wang, really commanded a whole new level of respect from others. She couldn't imagine, if Chen Wang finds out in the future that he had given up such a bright and intelligent lady, what kind of reaction will he have?

Slightly slowing down her steps, Liu yiniang couldn't help but laugh at herself. There was no need for her to concern herself with other people's affairs. Even if Yun Qian Meng was actually no good, she was still a legitimate daughter of the xiangfu, and had Fu Guo Gong Fu as well as the Empress Dowager to back her; regarding her marriage, Yun Xuan Zhi would never treat her unfairly. Instead, she should quickly start thinking about her own Yan'er's future!

Seeing Liu Han Yu leave, Mu Chun cleaned up the tea set on the table. She was somewhat puzzled by her young miss's unwillingness to live in a better room. Regarding what Liu yiniang said last time, she just sealed her lips and didn't mention it!

Furthermore, Mu Chun felt for Yun Qian Meng it was not worth it to vainly let Liuyiniang gain a big benefit. Her eyebrows knitted together, she said with dissatisfaction, "Why should xiaojie be so kind-hearted, working hard for other's benefit?!"

Yun Qian Meng's lily-white hands propped up her left cheek as her eyes smilingly gazed at Mu Chun's facial expression. She only felt that this yatou was really cute and innocent, somewhat lightening up her current heavy feelings!

However, she was afraid that Liu Han Yu had other objectives for sending over the register!

Although she refused her kindness, she couldn't stop Liu Han Yu from coming over to play nice again!

“If Liu yiniang sends people to deliver the register here, let her see me personally!” After deliberating, Yun Qian Meng’s expression slightly sank, having somewhat unraveled the puzzle in her mind.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 18

Glossary

- 嬷嬷 mama – an older female servant
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; often used by servants speaking to their masters
- 老 lao – old
- 老奴 laonu – old slave
- 丫头 yatou/ 丫鬟 yahuan – servant girl
- 妹妹 meimei – younger sister;
- 姐姐 jiejie – elder sister; can be added to names to show respect or a close relationship;
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife, missus;
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

(TL Note: Sorry for being late!)

“Hong Xiang, has laoye returned today?!” Having learnt her lesson from last time, Su Qing was unexpectedly much more obedient recently!

However, while she couldn't leave herself, she constantly sent the yatou by her side to go out, thinking up every possible method to have them attract Yun Xuan Zhi to visit her Feng He Yuan!

Hong Xiang had barely stepped into the room when heard Su Qing's inquiry. Her steps slowed slightly as she carefully raised her head to examine Su Qing's expression before she answered somewhat fearfully, "Reporting to yiniang, laoye just returned, but has already been invited to Xiang He Yuan by Liu yiniang!"

Pa..... A jasper teacup was suddenly thrown at Hong Xiang's feet, scaring her until she didn't dare to move forwards. She could only hide beside the entrance, pulling tightly at the door cotton curtains both hands, and keep her eyes lowered, not daring to look at Su Qing's vicious expression!

"What are you hiding for? Hurry up and get over here!" Seeing that Hong Xiang was scared to the point of kneeling on the floor, Su Qing recalled her earlier answer and only felt a wave of anger rising from her chest. She felt, now that she was in dire straits, even a lowly yahuan had the courage to talk back to her!

Thinking that way, Su Qing immediately pulled out a jade silver hairpin from her hair and tightly gripped it in her palms. When Hong Xiang got closer, she used one hand to pull at the yatou who was dragging her feet, as another hand began to stab at Hong Xiang's cheeks with the sharp end of the hairpin.....

"Yiniang... Yiniang... Please spare me....." In just a moment, blood covered Hong Xiang's face. The pain caused her to involuntarily cry out loud and beg for forgiveness!

But Su Qing was determined to punish her as she gave Wang mama by her side a meaningful glance. Wang mama then immediately walked over, restrained Hong Xiang's struggling body forcefully with one hand, while pulling back her hair with another, forcing her face upwards to make it easier for Su Qing to hit her!

"Cheap wench, who thought you to say yiniang? Our furen is xiangye's favorite, in the entire fu, who dares to disrespect her? You sure are clever, picking up the manners from the other side, changing furen's title at your whim!" While Wang mama scolded, her right leg didn't idle as she used all of her strength to kick at Hong Xiang's waist, causing so much pain that the poor girl's tears were falling like the rain. Even so, she didn't dare to cry out loudly and could only plead piteously.....

"Wang mama, that's enough, after today's lesson, see if she will dare in the

future!” Tired of beating and scolding, Su Qing stamped on Hong Xiang’s chest with one foot, then handed over the hairpin to Wang mama. She picked up the teacup on the table and calmly took a sip!

Wang mama still felt like taking one extra step, and trampled Hong Xiang until she was flat on the floor before she tidied up her somewhat disheveled clothes. Pulling out a silk handkerchief from her bosom, she wiped the blood clean off the silver hairpin, then, carefully replacing it in Su Qing’s hair, she somewhat meaningfully said, “Furen, this could be letting that Liu Han Yu slut get a huge benefit! Being grounded for half a month, just these few days, even laoye’s spirit got hooked away by her! Adding on that person in Qi Luo Yuan, we can’t just sit around and wait for death!”

Su Qing quietly listened to Wang mama’s words. This wet nurse who had followed her into the xiangfu from her maternal family, was naturally heavily relied upon by Su Qing. That’s why, after Wang mama finished, she nodded a few times.

“Mama can rest assured, I won’t let those two sluts sleep on a bed of roses!” Heavily slamming her teacup on the table, Su Qing’s pupils flashed with a fierce light, “Hmph, they really believe that taking away my authority will mean that the xiangfu is theirs? Wishful thinking!”

“That’s right! They think that the whole xiangfu has already fallen into their hands, but they haven’t realized that this estate is still firmly within furen’s hands! Only, furen still needs to make sure to plan early, from these few times furen has confronted her, this da xiaojie is really different compared to the past. Nubi suspects, such a big change in attitude, could it really be demonic possession?” Seeing Hong Xiang was still clutching her face while softly crying in the room, Wang mama shot a resentful glance, this time leaned closely to Su Qing’s ear and spoke in a low voice!

Wang mama’s words made Su Qing’s eyes light up, a flash of malicious intent streaking across her pupils. The corners of her lips gradually curved upwards as she heavily nodded, “Mama’s words have unexpectedly reminded me! That Yun Qian Meng met an accident in the palace, and the only thing that the palace doesn’t lack is vengeful spirits, perhaps she brought some dirty things into our xiangfu!”

These two days, Su Qing thought hard to find fault with Yun Qian Meng, but her opponent was too crafty, staying within Qi Luo Yuan all day. With her being grounded, wanting to grab ahold of Yun Qian Meng's shortcomings, was really not easy!

But Wang mama's words have unexpectedly allowed Su Qing to catch an important point!

After all, Yun Qian Meng's recent changes were shocking to even Yun Xuan Zhi; as long as she added some embellishment, she believed that she could firmly convince him!

As for Liu Han Yu and Yun Yan, they thought that they found a pillar of support, but who would imagine that this pillar was not the least bit reliable. When the moment comes, they'll see how Yun Xuan Zhi will take care of them!

Thinking along those lines, Su Qing coldly smiled, lifted her hand to let Wang mamamove closer and lowly briefed her on some matters.....

"Xiaojie, san xiaojie came!" Liu Han Yu really did take Yun Qian Meng's words to heart, these few days, Yun Yan's time spent around Qi Luo Yuan was even longer than the time spent staying at Liu Han Yu's Xiang He Yuan!

Hearing Mu Chun's call, Yun Qian Meng put down the brush in her hand. She lifted up the writing paper and lightly blew at the calligraphy, then handed it over to Shui'er waiting by her side and received a wet handkerchief from Bing'er to clean her hands before leaving for the outer hall.....

Yun Yan saw Yun Qian Meng approach and immediately stood up, respectfully greeting her, "Jiejie!"

"Yan'er came, let's sit!" Yun Qian Meng lightly smiled as she spoke. Only, her eyes were pointed at the mama standing beside Yun Yan.

It could be seen that this mama was somewhat aged, the hair on her temples had already turned white and the skin on her face was covered with faint old spots. Her clothing was plain and simple, didn't resemble the clothing of a mama from the xiangfu. However, her humbly lowered eyes faintly shined with a clear light!

Yun Qian Meng carefully examined her for a while, but found that this mama

didn't emerge within her memories. She smiled but stayed silent, waiting for Yun Yan to speak!

"Jiejie, yiniang has been busy with household matters for the past few days and couldn't come over to pay respects. Please be forgiving!" Yun Yan was also a clever lady. She waited for Yun Qian Meng to examine the person beside her before she gently spoke!

Yun Qian Meng retrieved her gaze as she heard Yun Yan speak, then smiled, "One family, no need to be so distant! Meimei coming everyday, isn't it just fine to just accompany me?"

But Yun Yan raised her eyes to look at the three yatou behind Yun Qian Meng. Her eyes showed a little pity as she said, "Jiejie is da xiaojie, but with only three yatou by your side, outsiders will laugh if they hear about it! Yiniang is busy today, so sent me to bring the register for Jiejie to look through, thirty servants have been conveniently transferred to let jiejie pick and choose!"

Finishing, Yun Yan gave the old mama by her side a slight sidelong glance, only for that mama to immediately step forward and kowtowed towards Yun Qian Meng, "Laonu greets da xiaojie!"

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 19

Glossary

- 嬷嬷 mama – an older female servant
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; often used by servants speaking to their masters
- 丫头 yatou/ 丫鬟 yahuan – servant girl
- 妹妹 meimei – younger sister;
- 姐姐 jiejie – elder sister; can be added to names to show respect or a close relationship;
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife, missus;
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

Yun Qian Meng did not hurry to let that mama rise. She turned her gaze toward Yun Yan and lightly asked, “Don’t know what meimei means?”

When she saw that Yun Qian Meng didn’t immediately accept the person she had brought over, she couldn’t help but be shocked by her cautiousness. Without changing her smile, she explained, “jiejie, this Mi mama is one of the old servants from the xiangfu when furen was still alive! But after furen had passed away due to illness, Su yiniang dismissed a large part of the fu’s servants! When yiniang passed the register to meimei, she urged that if jiejie has anything you don’t understand, you can ask Mi mama!”

Yun Qian Meng carefully listened to Yun Yan's explanation knew that this was one of their plans to get into her good books, took another look at Mi mama. Her hairstyle and clothing were different from those allotted by the xiangfu. Surely, Liu Han Yu must have spent quite a lot of effort to look for her!

When she recalled how Liu Han Yu brought up Qu furen's death and dowry matters, Yun Qian Meng was suddenly enlightened!

Perhaps this Mi mama knew about the happenings that year, otherwise Su Qing wouldn't dismiss so many workers just to pull the wool over people's eyes!

It seems that this time, she could not refuse to accept Yun Yan and her mother's feelings!

Thinking so, a faint smile floated on Yun Qian Meng lips as she gently said, "Mi mama, please rise! I only have three yatou by my side, and usually prefer to stay indoors rather than go outside; not familiar with the human affairs of the fu. Since mama was an elderly in the fu, help me pick a few trustworthy people!

Although Yun Qian Meng accepted their kind intentions, she expressed her own opinion clearly in the words she just said!

Yun Qian Meng did not completely trust Yun Yan and her mother!

Even if Mi mama was an elderly from xiangfu, Yun Qian Meng who was unfamiliar with the past events didn't clearly know which faction she belonged to in the past!

Maybe this Mi mama had already been bribed by Yun Yan and her mother. If she rashly kept this person by her side, then they would have her daily activities at the tip of their fingers!

Thus, Yun Qian Meng only permitted Mi mama to help her select a few servants but did not promise anything else yet!

Mi mama was also very clever and figured out the hidden meaning in Yun Qian Meng's words. She kowtowed once in thanks then stood up and immediately, following protocol, returned to her original spot and didn't speak!

Yun Yan showed a happy face and immediately allowed her personal yatou, Lü Rui, to bring the servants in. She retrieved two registers from her sleeves, one

new, one old, and handed them over to Yun Qian Meng, smiling, “jiejie, these servants’ background and character are all listed in this register. Please take a look! If you’re not satisfied, you can look through the other one, and choose again!”

Yun Qian Meng nodded as she received the registers. First opening the newer one, she carefully went through the servants’ names and characters!

Yun Yan then signaled Lü Rui with her eyes, for her to immediately move to the front and announce each of the servants names in order.

When the servants heard their names, they each wore smiles and stepped forward, respectfully bowing to Yun Qian Meng!

All of them understood that the current young miss had some authority, so being assigned to work in Qi Luo Yuan was probably a good thing. All of them thought to give Yun Qian Meng a good impression!

Yet Yun Qian Meng’s attention was focused on the register she held. She only faintly swept a glance towards the actual people before her. On the other hand, Mi mama had her head slightly raised as her seemingly expressionless eyes were shrewdly sizing up the servants. After Lü Rui finished presenting them, she lowered her head again!

“jiejie, what do you think? Have you taken a liking to any of these yatou?” When Lü Rui returned to her side, Yun Yan put down her teacup. Smiling at Yun Qian Meng, she carefully probed!

Yun Qian Meng closed the register. Somewhat tiredly, she lifted her own cup and took a sip, then said, “I actually don’t have much of an opinion. Let’s hear Mimama’s suggestions then!”

Finishing, Yun Qian Meng’s smiling eyes shot directly towards Mi mama.....

Although Mi mama had her head lowered, she still felt her gaze. Heart tightening, she cautiously said, “Answering da xiaojie, nubi thinks, Qian mama, Fang mama, Liu mama, Bai mama, these four are useful! From the yatou, Zhi Tao, Wen Lan, Le Ling, Yi Xiang, Bai Mei, An’er, these six are useful!”

Finishing, Mi mama retreated to the side, and didn’t speak further. It could be seen that she was a person that stays within her bounds.

Yun Qian Meng listened to Mi mama and looked over the servants she had suggested, lightly nodding her head.

It seemed that Mi mama had the ability to make discerning judgments. With merely a glance, she picked a few good ones. There was hardly any difference from Yun Qian Meng's own choices!

Inwardly understanding that Yun Qian Meng still had some doubts about her, when Mi mama finished answering, she didn't try to make further persuasions, showing that was an able and efficient person!

Yet Yun Yan, who had been observing her expression from the start was shocked when Yun Qian Meng was able to accurately discern the servants when their names were spoken!

Just now Yun Qian Meng had only swept a glance at these people, but had already remembered their name and appearance. It could be seen that she took this matter seriously, but her expression had been relatively indifferent. This was enough to make Yun Yan realize that she shouldn't be fooled by another's outer appearance!

"Does jiejie find these people alright?" After her analysis, Yun Yan's smile had dimmed a bit, as she held even deeper respect towards Yun Qian Meng!

Yun Qian Meng noticed how careful she was and slightly eased up her heart. She nodded to say, "Mi mama's insight is not bad! Since that's the case, these four will stay behind to assign Qi Luo Yuan's heavy labor! Zhi Tao, Le Ling, Yi Xiang, An'er, will be third-ranked yahuan, Wen Lan and Bai Mei will be second-ranked yahuan! As for Mi mama, she will temporarily assume the position of Qi Luo Yuan's steward mama and properly arrange their daily tasks!

"Yes!" Receiving the appointment, Mi mama immediately stepped forward to bow, then turned to lead the servants to leave the yard!

"Since jiejie has already settled everything, meimei will return to report to yiniang!" Seeing that her task was complete, Yun Yan quickly stood and smiled to announce her withdrawal!

Yun Qian Meng didn't detain her and allowed Mu Chun to send off Yun Yan. She then picked up the older register and carefully looked through it again.....

Only, the further she read, the more shocked she felt.....

This register, seemingly written over a decade ago, recorded all of the servants that had served in the fu when Qu furen was still alive!

But now, there were no longer any traces of these people in the xiangfu. Only either “dismissal” or “death” was written next to their names; the only exception was one Xia mama who had the words “mentally disabled” next to hers!

“xiaojie, it’s getting late, let nubi light a candle before you continue looking through this register!” Mu Chun after sending off Yun Yan and returning to the room, saw that was Yun Qian Meng still looking at the register in he hands. Only after she saw that the sky outside had gradually darkened, did she give a soft reminder!

Yun Qian Meng slightly raised her head. She only saw that the setting sun had long since been hidden by the hills and the faint moon had unknowingly ascended to midair. Closing the register, she calmly asked, “Any peculiarities at the courtyard entrance?”

“Reporting to xiaojie, nubi just sent off san xiaojie, then saw a yatou suspiciously looking around at the entrance to our courtyard. When nubi approached, that yatou unexpectedly ran far away! nubi looked carefully, she looked like Su yiniang’s Hong Xiang!” Carefully covering the faint yellow flame on the red candle, Mu Chun carried over a candlestick and placed it on the table, took a look at the vacant outside, then boldly asked, “xiaojie, you accepted so many people today, and all of them were sent over by Liu yiniang, won’t it be inappropriate? nubi sees that Mi mama is not just a normal exceptional person!”

Seeing Mu Chun so tense, Yun Qian Meng laughed brightly, but her eyes still calmly looked outside, “Don’t worry! They’re just looking for a pillar of support, so they won’t come over to me to dig their own graves! As for keeping Mi mama, I naturally have a use for her!

She had already felt out Yun Yan today. After examining her changing expressions, Yun Qian Meng knew that Liu Han Yu didn’t plan on pulling tricks with these yatou. Her act of picking so many servants with great fanfare was just her plan to pull wool over people’s eyes. If Su Qing knew her real aim, it was likely that she would destroy the evidence!

“After finishing the evening meal, let Mi mama come over!” Putting away the register in her sleeves, Yun Qian Meng commanded.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 20

Glossary

- 嬷嬷 mama – an older female servant
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; often used by servants speaking to their masters
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife, missus;
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

“nubi greets da xiaojie!” After dinner, Mi mama was brought before Yun Qian Meng by Mu Chun.

At the moment, the room was very well-lit with candles in all four corners. Yet Yun Qian Meng was still studying the register, wearing the same pale-yellow garment from daytime and a yellow skirt that was embroidered with golden orchids. Her full head of fine black hair was lightly drawn in half, only adorned by a single orchid openwork jade hairpin. Her face was elegant like the moon; her eyes calm like water, as if able to see through everything. Mi mama who had encountered countless people actually momentarily forgot her etiquette and followed Yun Qian Meng's silhouette closely with her eyes, almost thinking that she was looking at the shadow of the previous furen.....

Only, when furen had lived in this room, it didn't look so crude and shabby!

If furen was watching in heaven and saw her living environment now, how broken-hearted would she feel?!

"Mi mama, have you already arranged everything for the servants?" Yun Qian Meng had noticed Mi mama's measuring gaze, but didn't interrupt her. Instead, maintaining a natural expression as she looked through the register in her hands, she didn't speak until she had reached the last page.

Hearing Yun Qian Meng's sudden question, Mi mama immediately retreated her melancholy and then lowered her eyes. She softly but respectfully replied, "Answering da xiaojie, everything has been properly arranged, da xiaojie has no need to worry!"

Appropriate response, proper posture and movements, all of these showed that Mimama had once received very good training, allowing Yun Qian Meng to make an assured nod. She lightly placed the register on the table, but didn't let it go from her long slender fingers. Tapping on the cover with a fine finger, Yun Qian Meng looked at Mi mama; her eyes that were like a smile yet not a smile hid an intelligence that was difficult to overlook!

"mama is an elderly from the fu, with you arranging these matters, I'm naturally reassured!" She maintained her severe gaze on Mi mama's half-lowered face, but found that she didn't flinch, instead kept up an ordinary expression. Yun Qian Meng couldn't help but faintly show some praise in her eyes and continued, "Only, why did mama reenter the xiangfu? At mama's age, you should have returned to your village to retire and live in comfort!"

Hearing Yun Qian Meng ask her this, Mi mama slightly lowered her posture, somewhat frightened, and said, "Answering da xiaojie, nubi is from a poor family. What with living in comfort, as long as there is enough rice to eat, I will be more than satisfied! By chance, Liu yiniang said that the fu was in need of people, so nubi came here!"

Her words were half true and half lies, showing that Mi mama's attitude and manner of speech could be very convincing to others!

"Is that so? Liu yiniang is truly considerate!" However, at this kind of answer, Yun Qian Meng kept her indifferent expression!

She paused to take a sip of tea to moisten her throat, before she started speaking again, “It’s just that, now that you’ve entered my Qi Luo Yuan, I won’t permit any disloyalty! It doesn’t matter who recruited you, the one who lives in this Qi Luo Yuan is me, Yun Qian Meng! mama, can you remember this well?”

Her voice suddenly turned cold, causing Mi mama to shiver in her heart as she immediately responded, “This is of course! xiaojie can be reassured! nubi is not a person that will bite the hand that feeds!”

Seeing that her heart had some conscience, Yun Qian Meng nodded with satisfaction and finally got to the main point, “There’s one thing I don’t understand. Why did mama leave the fu in the past? Which zhuzi did you serve before this?”

When she heard Yun Qian Meng finally ask her this, Mi mama couldn’t bear it any longer. With a plop, she knelt on the floor, slightly lifting her aged face that was stricken with tears. Before she spoke, the sound of her shivering could be heard.....

“xiaojie... xiaojie... nubi... nubi has sinned... xiaojie.....” Her intermittent cries caused Yun Qian Meng to furrow her eyebrows. Signaling Mu Chun to shut the door, she motioned for Mi mama to rise.

But Mi mama heavily shook her head, and pushed away Mu Chun’s supporting arm with one hand before she said, “xiaojie, nubi used to serve furen, and also received her grace! But... But at the time I was muddle-headed, and abandoned furen instead! xiaojie, please punish!”

Mi mama’s wails didn’t evoke any pity from Yun Qian Meng. Instead, she retracted the little warmth that had appeared on her face and, looking directly at Mi mama with ice-cold eyes, said, “If that’s the case, Mi mama had better start explaining from the beginning!”

Mi mama lifted a hand to wipe her tears. She took a deep breath, steadied her emotions, then sadly said, “nubi was once a pozi that waited upon furen in the outer rooms. Two months before furen went into labor, nubi’s son was crippled in a fight. That Su yiniang came to me and said that as long as nubi left the xiangfu, nubi’s useless son would be saved! nubi for my child, ignored furen urging me to stay and left the xiangfu. Didn’t imagine, three months later, furen

passed away!”

As she spoke, Mi mama started to kowtow again and mumbled, “That year after nubi’s husband passed away, if not for furen taking in nubi’s family, how could we have lived for so long? But nubi, for my children, abandoned furen without care, didn’t even see furen one last time before she was gone!”

Hearing this, Yun Qian Meng recalled the records on the register, other than a Xiamama, the people by Yun furen’s side all met with mishaps two or three months before she passed away. She suddenly realized that this chain of events, was most likely planned by Su Qing!

First, she got rid of all the people loyal to Yun furen, that way, she could easily act against her!

“Mi mama, do you know a Xia mama?” Recalling the person in the register, Yun Qian Meng asked.

“She was furen’s wet nurse! I heard that after furen passed away, Xia mama went insane with grief!” Right now Mi mama regretted being unable to prove her loyalty to Yun Qian Meng. As long as she knew anything, she would not hide the slightest bit of information!

Yun Qian Meng saw that her forehead was already bleeding, then spoke, “Rise! What you said today, and your identity, must not be known to others!”

“Yes, nubi understands! nubi came here this time, only to atone for my sins. nubi only wishes to be able give xiaojie a helping hand and absolutely won’t cause trouble for xiaojie!” Seeing that Yun Qian Meng was keeping her calm, Mi mama felt comforted and immediately restrained her sealed in heart many years of sadness. She tidied up her clothes and stood to the side.

Yun Qian Meng rised and walked to the window. Slightly lifting her head to look at the shining moon, she sorted out the information she had just learned.

Su Qing was able to control the life and death of the servants when Yun furen was still alive. This, if not with Yun Xuan Zhi’s instigation, she wouldn’t have had the power to do so!

In that case, whether Yun furen’s death was natural or intentional, the answer was already obvious!

But still, since Yun furen passed away prematurely, why did Su Qing allow Yun Qian Meng to stay alive until now?

It seems that Su Qing still had some fear towards the Empress Dowager and Fu Guo Gong Fu's influence. After all, if Fu Guo Gong Fu's daughter and grandchild met with accidents one after the other, they wouldn't be willing to take things lying down. After a thorough investigation, there was no guarantee that they won't find any traces or clues!

She can't help but admit that Su Qing had both courage and cunning. She really did have a grasp on other people's mindset!

"mama, come over, I have something to ask of you!" Retrieving her gaze, Yun Qian Meng calmly said.

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 21

Glossary

- 嬷嬷 mama – an older female servant
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; often used by servants speaking to their masters
- 老奴 laonu – old slave
- 丫头 yatou/ 丫鬟 yahuan – servant girl
- 妹妹 meimei – younger sister;
- 姐姐 jiejie – elder sister; can be added to names to show respect or a close relationship;
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife, missus;
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

“furen, these days, san xiaojie has been diligently visiting Qi Luo Yuan! It looks like Liuyiniang is determined to side with da xiaojie!” Wang mama analyzed unkindly while lightly massaging Su Qing's shoulders.

“Hmph, it's best that they stick together. When the moment comes, I'll take care of those sluts in one fell swoop!” Su Qing threw her embroidery onto the table and squinted her eyes, the corners of her mouth exhibiting a cold smile, “mama, did you manage to find those people?”

When Su Qing mentioned that, Wang mama immediately lowered her head

and leaned closer to Su Qing's ear before she whispered, "Don't worry, furen! laonu has properly arranged everything! As soon as furen's confinement ends, we can hit them when they are least prepared!"

"Mum, what are you both talking about?" Before Su Qing had time to respond, the cotton curtains at the door were pulled aside. Wearing a full set of winter clothes, Yun Ruo Xue angrily stormed unannounced into the room!

"My xiaojie, such a cold day, why didn't you stay in your own room? If you were to catch a cold, then it won't be good!" As a draft of cold air entered the warm room, Wang mama hurriedly went to support Yun Ruo Xue and poured her a cup of hot tea to let her warm up her body.

Seeing that Yun Ruo Xue's small face didn't look rosy as before, Su Qing tenderly pulled her tiny hands and enclosed them in her own palms to warm them. She shot a fierce glare at the few servants behind Yun Ruo Xue and coldly scolded them, "You should know that it's cold out. Why didn't you prepare a warming stove for xiaojie? If xiaojie is nipped by the cold, can you shoulder the responsibility?"

The few servants, frightened by Su Qing's query, immediately kneeled on the floor, not daring to speak up or beg for forgiveness!

When Yun Ruo Xue saw her own servants' cowardly expressions, the anger displayed on her face increased. She said unhappily, "What are you expecting from them? When I got grounded for a few days, they're secretly thinking about how to mock me in their hearts!"

After she spoke, she glared fiercely at the shaking figures of the scared servants!

Wang mama saw that both her zhuzi were angry and quickly moved beside the servants, slapping each of them once. She then scolded, "What are you still doing here? Get out and serve!"

After getting beaten and scolded, they felt extremely wronged, but, they didn't dare to utter a sound and only silently stood up to hurriedly leave.

"Mum, I heard some servants gossiping that Qi Luo Yuan just recently gained a lot of new servants!" Now that only her mother and Wang mama were left in the

room, Yun Ruo Xue grumbled with dissatisfaction, “What’s so special about that Yun Qian Meng? That kind of person who was born under an unlucky star, does she really need so many people to serve her? Isn’t she pushing her luck too much?”

Still complaining, Yun Ruo Xue lifted the teacup off the table and took a few thirsty gulps!

Su Qing was naturally happy to see her own daughter. She held out a hand to stroke the hair that had fallen beside Yun Ruo Xue’s ears and said, “Let her be happy for a few days! Watch how mother will get revenge for you!”

Finishing, Su Qing’s eyes revealed an ominous glint. Yun Ruo Xue, who saw this, went wild with joy. Immediately throwing aside her teacup, she burrowed into Su Qing’s bosom and coyly said, “Mum, could it be that you already have a plan? Let me know so that I can share the happiness!”

Hugging Yun Ruo Xue, Su Qing’s vicious expression slightly dissipated, replaced with a faintly gentle smile. Patting Yun Ruo Xue’s back with one hand, she softly said, “Your mum and Wang mama have prepared some presents for Qi Luo Yuan, only afraid that they don’t have the courage to accept!”

When Yun Ruo Xue heard the word presents, her faintly smiling face turned gloomy. She somewhat angrily pushed away Su Qing’s hug and said with an awkward expression, “After she treated us like that, mum still wants to send her presents? Mum, you can’t really be scared of her, right? The Empress Dowager might be her maternal aunt, but our Su family aren’t vegetarians either! You should know, on my way here, I saw from a distance that Liu yiniang was bringing a dozen or more pretty young girls to Qi Luo Yuan! Say, what’s the meaning of her sending people there all the time?”

Hearing this, Su Qing exchanged a look with Wang mama and couldn’t help but feel curious. Obviously, quite a few people had just been added to Qi Luo Yuan. Why was Liu Han Yu sending people to Yun Qian Meng again in just a few days?

Thinking carefully about this, Su Qing grimly asked, “Xue’er, did you see clearly? Were there any pozi mixed in?”

Yun Ruo Xue saw that Su Qing was serious and momentarily forgot her own anger. Carefully recalling what she saw just now, she confirmed, “All of them

were yatou, even more so, they were personally brought to Qi Luo Yuan by Liu yiniang! Mum, is something wrong?”

Yet Su Qing only smiled without answering, her gentle eyes flashing with a viper-like killing intent. Pulling Yun Ruo Xue over, she explained closely to her ears.....

“da xiaojie, nubi is here to pay respects!” Before the person could even be seen, her voice resounded!

Liu yiniang was wearing a violet-red cloak, both her hands hidden in snow white rabbit-fur mittens. With an escort of many servant girls, she ignored the cold and advanced to Yun Qian Meng’s pavilion at a fast pace.

Fang mama and Bai mama who were serving outside immediately pulled the door curtains aside and let Liu yiniang enter. Instead, Mi mama, who was inside, took her coat and carefully hung it at one side.

“Has da xiaojie been well these days?” Liu yiniang asked cheerfully as she bowed towards the slightly reclined Yun Qian Meng.

Yun Qian Meng put away her book and looked at Liu yiniang’s glowing face with watery eyes before she laughed lightly, “yiniang came, please sit! Such a cold day, even I am feeling lazy. Perhaps only yiniang can be so diligent!”

Liu Han Yu sat down with a smile and earnestly sized up Yun Qian Meng’s appearance. Looking at her snow-white skin, both cheeks glowing with a faint red blush, she could see that Yun Qian Meng was now living quite well. Relieved, Liu Han Yu then said, “The color of xiaojie’s face is much better than before! Only, winter is coming. nubi saw that da xiaojie’s clothes are already old, so I decided to get the Jiangnan tailors to send some people over to take your measurements in the next few days and make a few extra sets of winter clothes! laoye actually also cares for xiaojie and let nubi pick a few healthful goods from the storehouse to send over, to let xiaojie nourish your body!”

As she spoke, one of her servants quietly went out. After just a moment, a few boxes were carried in a wooden box and opened it to reveal that it was completely filled with ginseng and other nourishing items!

Liu yiniang immediately stood up and picked up the various items as she

eagerly explained them to Yun Qian Meng!

Smiling while she looked at the things Liu yiniang held, Yun Qian Meng understood. This Liu yiniang was also a clever person, shortly within a week or so, she had managed to rein in Yun Xuan Zhi's temper and his habits. Otherwise, how could she easily take things out from the storehouse? The only thing was that she couldn't compete at Su Qing's level!

Still, seeing Liu yiniang tout the benefits of those valuable items, Yun Qian Meng knew that that she had more than just one reason when she came over to visit!

Giving Mi mama a look, Yun Qian Meng smiled and interrupted Liu Han Yu, "Walking all the way here, Liu yiniang must be tired, have some tea to drink first!"

Liu Han Yu knew that Yun Qian Meng had already seen through the fact that she had other business and put the items down. Smiling as she sat, she swept a measuring gaze across the people in the room, before she finally said, relieved, "da xiaojie, coming today, nubi has some matters to discuss with you!"

Yun Qian Meng took a sip of tea, then slowly lifted her eyes and smiled, "What matters?"

Liu yiniang slightly stretched forward. Her charming face leaned close to Yun Qian Meng, but her eyes turned to look towards the door, "da xiaojie, the fu only has two people, nubi and Su yiniang, to serve xiangye. With only you and two other xiaojie, it's hard for the fu to avoid appearing empty! nubi thinks, should it be good to let xiangyereceive a few more concubines?"

Finishing, Liu Han Yu's lovely and gentle eyes somewhat nervously looked directly at Yun Qian Meng.....

Yet Yun Qian Meng only grasped a thin handkerchief to wipe the tea stains on the edges of her lips and calmly asked, "Is yiniang sincere about this?"

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 22

Glossary

- 嬷嬷 mama – an older female servant
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; often used by servants speaking to their masters
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife, missus;
- 嫡 di – related to the first wife, the children born of the first wife have higher standing
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

Liu Han Yu didn't think that Yun Qian Meng would ask her that. The smile on her face turned a bit stiff as she immediately lowered her eyes. Her lips formed a bitter smile as she gave a somewhat agonized reply, "In this life being able to serve xiangye and da xiaojie is already nubi's great fortune!"

Yun Qian Meng dully smiled to listen to Liu Han Yu's half-hearted explanation, but didn't try to expose her lies!

Just think, which woman was willing to share her husband with another woman?

Even though this was the ancient times, where women all had to control their manners, words and actions in accordance to the seven codes of divorce; deep in

their hearts, for their own husbands to take a concubine, they nevertheless felt most unwilling!”

However, for Liu yiniang who, first, didn’t have a son; second, didn’t have a strong maternal family as her backing, to rely on a few days of favor to suppress Su Qing, afraid it’s just indulging in fantasy!

Adding on the fact that she was no longer considered young, rather than watching Yun Xuan Zhi pick one himself in the future, why not appear a bit more generous and virtuous right now, and help Yun Xuan Zhi plan these affairs? This way, she would leave a good impression on him, and also cause the other woman to be grateful to her. Besides, she could still use this woman to pressure Su Qing. It was simply killing three birds with a single arrow, how could she be against it?

Thinking so, Yun Qian Meng’s smile became slightly brighter. It would seem that Liuyiniang was still a shrewd person. She understood how to prepare for a rainy day, and was more fully aware of the principle of give-and-take compared to Su Qing. Previously giving her assistance to take over the management was a correct decision!

“I might be the eldest daughter of the family, but in the end, I’m still a girl who has yet to marry out of the family. As for helping father to take in another person, this should still be left to Liu yiniang to do as you see fit!” Yun Qian Meng saw that Liu Han Yu handled her affairs in an appropriate fashion, so she was assured to hand over these matters to her. She believed that even if a few more people entered the xiangfu, it wouldn’t cause any large storms and waves!

When Liu Han Yu heard her say this, the heavy feeling in her heart finally settled down.

After all, this large and influential estate had many rules and customs. Having been promoted under the hands of Yun Qian Meng, if she didn’t agree to this, then she would definitely not follow through with the plan by herself!

Instead, with this da xiaojie’s intelligence, surely she had already guessed her true intentions. Now that she had nodded and agreed, that means she approved of her own methods, also, her execution of this plan would be met with much less resistance!

Having deliberated over and over for half a day, Liu yiniang once more wore a smiling expression, fished out a few pre-selected picture scrolls from her sleeves. She unfolded them one by one, then spoke in a joyful manner, “nubi fancies four of these girls. Please have a look over, nubi will then arrange where they should go!”

Yun Qian Meng put down her teacup, then took a look at the few portraits held out by Liu Han Yu and dully nodded her head.....

Liu yiniang saw that she was really, as she had said, not interested to take mind of these matters, so she quickly retrieved the portraits and put them away, then she lowered her voice to say, “da xiaojie, Su yiniang’s punishment is going to end soon. You see, about the management of the xiangfu.....”

Hearing this, Yun Qian Meng made a smile that was not a smile, and shot a cold glance at Liu Han Yu out of the corner of her eyes, dully saying, “Don’t tell me yiniang wants to roll over and give up your power to her?”

At these words, Liu Han Yu’s face paled, her smiling expression momentarily froze, but her mouth had unconsciously released a single word, “No!”

Only, the second she saw Yun Qian Meng’s lightly smiling appearance, she suddenly realized she had forgotten her own manners and immediately stood up in terror. Lowering her head, she explained in a small voice, “nubi isn’t a person who is greedy and unwilling to let go of power, but.....”

Before she finished speaking, Yun Qian Meng had lifted a hand to interrupt her.....

“yiniang doesn’t need to be so cautious and solemn, since I had helped yiniang attain this assignment, naturally won’t let yiniang simply throw it away!” Pointing at the stool that Liu Han Yu had been sitting on and gesturing for her to sit back down, Yun Qian Meng calmly said.

Liu Han Yu made a small bow, and sat down as if overwhelmed by her favor. Hearing Yun Qian Meng’s unperturbed response, she couldn’t help but lift her head towards her. She only felt that Yun Qian Meng’s expression was calm, her crystal clear black eyes were similar to a piece of top-quality nephrite jade, emitting a fascinating radiance, momentarily causing others to be unable to perceive her inner thoughts!

Yun Qian Meng saw that she was looking at her with a glazed expression, secretly found it funny, but maintained the calmness on her face, “yiniang’s actions today, will definitely cause father to look at you in a new light! Furthermore, yiniang understands in your heart, we in the fu are all womenfolk, father might not say it, but surely still hopes to have a son as an heir! Even though Su yiniang has been pampered by father for so long, there haven’t been any happy events. She can’t be compared to yiniang’s ability to see the bigger picture, yiniang’s actions could be made into a literary work!”

Finishing, Yun Qian Meng didn’t speak further and casually picked up her book to continue reading.....

Liu Han Yu heard her advice and immediately understood the meanings hidden inside. In an instant, her worried frown was swept away. Her face full of smiles, she stood up to excuse herself and quietly withdrew from the room.

“What’s the reason for xiaojie to help her so?!” Seeing that only Mu Chun and herself were left in the room, Mi mama frowned as she asked.

Although she was someone that Liu yiniang had exerted a lot of effort to find, because she felt guilty towards the late Yun furen, she was even more loyal towards Yunfuren’s birth daughter!

Yet Yun Qian Meng heard the similarities between her words and those of Mu Chun and couldn’t help but find it funny. Her lips unconsciously curled upwards as her slender fingers turned a page. She spoke serenely, “mama is slightly mistaken, instead of saying that we are helping her, you should say that we are helping ourselves!”

Just think, Su Qing had just been grounded for half a month because of her. Within this time, Yun Xuan Zhi practically didn’t set foot into her room. It was almost certain that Su Qing was full of bitter hatred for her, only waiting for the perfect opportunity to settle the debt!

Although Yun Qian Meng couldn’t figure out which plans Su Qing would use against her, but now Liu Han Yu had delivered herself to the door, she could exploit this and force Su Qing to divert her attention!

After all, Yun Xuan Zhi not liking his own legitimate daughter was a widely known fact. Even if she had the support of the Empress Dowager, if she

continuously attacked Su Qing openly, Yun Xuan Zhi would surely be resentful; only afraid that it would provoke his backlash at that time!

It would be better to borrow Liu Han Yu's hand, no need to waste a soldier or a pawn, and possibly win some favorable impressions from Yun Xuan Zhi!

Mi mama was also not a stupid person. Seeing that Yun Qian Meng appeared to have devised a plan, her worry was gradually released. She then went out to remind the servants in the courtyard, telling them to be cautious and prudent in their handling of matters, so as not to be taken advantage of by others!

Only, just as everything was settling down, right after midnight, some trouble had come from Feng He Yuan.....

Chu Wang Fei - Chapter 23

Glossary

- 嬷嬷 mama – an older female servant
- 奴婢 nubi – slave servant girl; often used by servants speaking to their masters
- 夫人 furen – legitimate wife, missus;
- 主子 zhuzi – the masters of the household
- 小姐 xiaojie – young miss; usually from a good family, but can be used to refer to any young girl
- 姨娘 yiniang – concubine, not the legitimate wife; added to the end of the maternal name to show their (lower) status compared to the wife
- 相符 xiangfu – the minister's estate

“What happened?” Waking up from the noise, Yun Qian Meng slightly frowned. Wrapped in a brocade quilt, she sat up and, somewhat annoyed, questioned the servants that were waiting upon her outside at night.

“Answering xiaojie, it's Su yiniang's Hong Xiang making noise to meet with xiaojie, saying that there are important matters!” When Bai Mei who was on night duty today heard Yun Qian Meng's inquiry, she immediately responded in a low voice.

At this moment, Mi mama and Mu Chun who had already quickly dressed up rushed over. Mu Chun carefully pulled aside the door curtains and walked briskly to the table, lighted a small lamp then took a small orange coat and draped it over Yun Qian Meng's shoulders. Then, she helped her tuck in the folds, lest Yun Qian Meng caught a cold!

Outside, Mi mama was already starting to criticize Hong Xiang who had barged in. Only, afraid that she would disturb Yun Qian Meng, her voice was lowered as much as possible, “You yatou, how can you be so inept? In the middle of the night like this, da xiaojie has already gone to bed. For disturbing xiaojie’s rest, see how laoye will punish you!”

But Hong Xiang was completely unperturbed by Mi mama’s words. Seeing that Yun Qian Meng’s room had lit-up, she instead boldly raised her voice to shout towards the room, “What is mama saying!? Our er xiaojie is almost on the point of death, don’t tell me that da xiaojie can continue to sleep like this?”

Her remarks caused all the servants standing in Qi Luo Yuan to feel a wave of anger rising in their hearts. As if anything that happened to that er xiaojie had to be blamed on their da xiaojie!

What’s more, even if something had really happened to her, why didn’t she go to look for a doctor? What’s the point of running over to Qi Luo Yuan to make noise?

Isn’t this obviously relying on xiangye’s favor to bully their da xiaojie?

Mi mama was not a vegetarian. Seeing that a little yatou dared to stand on Yun Qian Meng’s head to shout and mock, a cold smile immediately floated from her mouth. Her glare caused Hong Xiang to momentarily tremble, as she sternly scolded, “er xiaojie was grounded these few days, has no contact with our xiaojie at all, for what reason are you putting the black pot on our da xiaojie?! Be careful that I report this to xiangye. Want to see if xiangye will believe the nonsense from a little hussy like you, or believe the open truth!? Why don’t you take a look at where you are? This isn’t the place for you to go crazy and make a scene! If I reported this back to Liu yiniang, you will be sent back to the human traffickers; see if you can still act so rampantly!”

Hong Xiang who was being reprimanded by Mi mama, upon hearing the mention of human traffickers, momentarily showed a panicked expression. Her expression turned deathly pale and her trembling lips couldn’t find any words to refute the criticism. She could only bite down and stand firmly on her previous words. Stiffening her neck and widening her eyes to glare, she bellowed back, “Who are you? Why don’t we see who laoye really cares for from the bottom of

his heart? If er xiaojie is met with any mishaps today, laoye will definitely peel off your skin!”

“Why don’t you tell ben xiaojie clearly, whose skin will laoye peel off?” A clear and cold voice was heard from within the room. Everyone slightly lifted their eyes to see Shui’er and Bing’er carefully lift the door curtains as Mu Chun supported Yun Qian Meng who wore an indifferent expression as she walked out.

Yun Qian Meng’s black hair was arranged in a simple fashion, lightly nipped and fastened together with a purple jade waning moon lily magnolia hairpin. A beige fur-lined brocade cloak was draped over her shoulders. Her unpowdered face looked simple but elegant, but, in particular, her black eyes that were increasingly bright under the moonlight were currently emitting a wave of chilliness. The originally rampant and aggressive Hong Xiang momentarily shut her mouth, losing the courage to act rashly!

“Greetings to da xiaojie!” Everyone who saw Yun Qian Meng come out, bowed one after another. Only Hong Xiang, who was previously mouthing off incessantly, stood blankly as she had momentarily forgotten about her etiquette!

“Since meimei is currently struggling between life and death, I as a jiejie must naturally go to show my concern!” Yun Qian Meng barely swept a glance at Hong Xiang, before she brought her servants to walk towards the gate!

Just as Hong Xiang thought she had escaped from calamity, Yun Qian Meng’s steps stilled and she slowly turned around. Her expression was as calm as always, but her eyes contained austerity, Hong Xiang almost believed that her own eyes were mistaken!

“Mi mama, pass word to Liu yiniang that Hong Xiang does not comprehend etiquette. In the middle of the night, she selfishly barged into ben xiaojie’s courtyard, causing ben xiaojie to lose sleep. Our xiangfu cannot afford to keep such a precious nubi!” Yun Qian Meng gazed directly at Hong Xiang, spoke clearly then turned to leave.

“da xiaojie is unjust!” Yet, at this moment, Hong Xiang unexpectedly complained loudly, temporarily pausing Yun Qian Meng’s steps!

She only quickly rushed before Yun Qian Meng, her eyes tearful and her

expression resentful, as she wailed accusingly, “da xiaojie is purposely making things difficult because nubi is Su yiniang’s servant! nubi won’t accept this!”

Watching Hong Xiang try to confuse black and white, all the servants present creased their brows in succession, but Yun Qian Meng’s lips had curved into a mocking sneer. She immediately asked coldly, “Your zhuzi has to bend her knee and bow to me if we meet. What is your identity? Not only do you not bow, you even spoke rudely. Dispelling you from the fu is already the lightest punishment, don’t tell me that you really want to suffer physical pain?”

From the start, Yun Qian Meng’s expression had been calm and indifferent. Even the slightest trace of anger could not be seen. However, within the quiet and chilly night, her voice was like a blade of ice stabbing towards Hong Xiang, causing her to lose the color in her face. Both her legs went soft as she collapsed and sat on the floor!

Facing off against such a small character, Yun Qian Meng didn’t have any intention of speaking further. Leaving behind two mama to watch after Hong Xiang, she led everyone else towards Feng He Yuan!

When they arrived at the gate to Feng He Yuan, they heard noisy weeping and the fragmented sounds of footsteps. A faint feeling of loathing formed within her heart, but she still set foot into the courtyard, only to find that it was already full of servants. As they saw her arrive, they all bowed in salute.

Yun Xian Zhi’s angry voice could be heard from Su Qing’s outer room, “Are all of you dead? Asked you all to hire a doctor, why hasn’t anyone shown up after half a day? Is it that my xiangfu’s rice is too good to eat?”

At this moment, no one anticipated Su Qing to cry out, “laoye, we are now in dire straits, which one of the servants will look up to us? Xue’er has already suffered a headache for a whole three days, if not for Wang mama who wasn’t reassured by these yatou and came here to take a look, then only afraid that nubi would still be completely in the dark! My child, what’s happened to you? Is it really that our house has some dirty things that has come to possess you?

Mu Chun had just lifted the curtains, as Yun Qian Meng heard Su Qing’s veiled accusation. She secretly made a cold laugh, but her face still showed an anxious and concerned expression as she stepped into the room. Her voice full of worry,

she urgently asked, "Qian Meng greets father! How is meimei currently doing?"

Finishing, Yun Qian Meng swept a look at Liu yiniang who was standing to the side, only finding that her eyes were hiding an indignant expression. Slightly shivering in her heart, she realized that this was another challenge that Su Qing had planned for her!

Yun Xian Zhi saw Yun Qian Meng enter and noted that she had hurried over, as her appearance was not well done-up. But, he didn't have the mood to be concerned about her, and only dully spoke, "Such a cold day, the courtyards are so far apart, you don't need to come over! Better not play catch with the illness!"

Yun Qian Meng partially hung her head as she patiently listened to Yun Xian Zhi's words and understood. It would seem that Yun Xian Zhi had just been together with the new woman tonight, but unexpectedly, Su Qing suddenly sent someone to drag him over; so he borrowed Yun Ruo Xue's illness to throw a tantrum!

After this deliberation, Yun Qian Meng finally answered slowly and unhurriedly, "Thanks for father's concern! Just now Su yiniang's Hong Xiang came to Qi Luo Yuan and kept strongly emphasizing that meimei was at death's door, so much so that she ignored her position to make noise at our Qi Luo Yuan. nǚ'er was worried for meimei and hurried over! Don't know how is meimei's current condition? Liu yiniang, have you sent people to hire a doctor yet?"

As soon as Yun Qian Meng has spoken, Yun Xian Zhi's already unhappy face turned even uglier. A severe gaze shot towards Su Qing, as his words full of reproach, "Not taking proper care of Xue'er, even letting a yatou go and bully da xiaojie! How do you do your job as a yiniang?!"

Su Qing didn't expect Yun Xian Zhi to be angry at her because of such a small matter. The tears in her eyes continued to accumulate, as she was feeling extremely resentful in her heart. Speaking in a small voice, she answered, "Xue'er was still perfectly fine a few days ago, only recently did she say that her headaches were hard to bear! laoye, have you seen Xue'er get sick in the past? nubi is her birth mother, how can I not care for her? As for the Hong Xiang that da xiaojie talked about, that yatou was impatient and incompetent when serving

at nubi's side, nubi has already tried to correct her countless times, but that yatou is like a dead person, doesn't care about anything, ifda xiaojie is unhappy, then just take care of her!"

With a few simple words, Su Qing had cleanly washed her hands off all responsibility!

Even Yun Xian Zhi's previous angry look, at her lovely and touching appearance, had subsided from his heart.

He lifted his hand to pat Su Qing's shoulder a couple of times, thinking to console her with a few words, but suddenly, Yun Ruo Xue intense screaming was heard, "Ghost!"